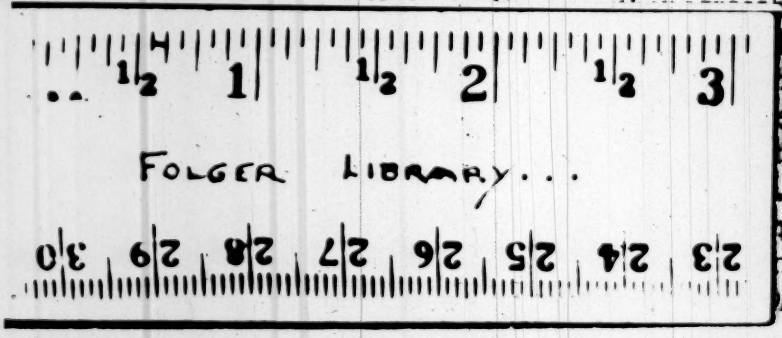
The Reformed Churches that ſtill retaine Biſhops, are, beſides the Eaſterne and Weſterne Churches,

1. All in the Dutchies of *Saxonie*, *Brunſwicke*, and *Lunenburg*.
2. All in the Dutchies of *Megaloburg*, and *Wirtemburg*.
3. All of the Churches within the Countries of the *Marqueſites* of *Bradenburg*, and *Bade*.
4. The Churches in the *Earledomes* of *Hemeberg*, *Lemings*, *Mansfield*, *Stalbergh*, *Rheniſterne*, *Swartzenberg*, *Hannawe*, *Oetingh*, *Glich*, and *Leonſtine*.
5. All in the *Baronies* of *Leniferg*, *Schenburg*, and *Wildenfield*.

Whereunto may be added, all the Churches in at leaſt 30 free Cities more; many of whoſe Territories are as ample as *Geneva*, none of theſe have received the Presbyterian Diſcipline.

To all theſe we might likewiſe adde the remainder of the *Waldenſes*, and *Albigenſes*, in *Piemont* or the parts adjoyning; or of the *Taborites* in *Bohemia*: All which, with the fore-named, together with the *Lutheran* Churches in *Poland*, *Denmarke*, and *Swethland*, are a ſufficient evidence, to evince this truth againſt the *Smectymnuans*; that they, who having taken the late Covenant (a great ſnare to tender Conſciences) think themſelves obliged to deſtroy



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I pray God open the peoples hearts, and ſo enlighten their underſtanding, that they may ſee their Errours, and abhorre their Seducers.

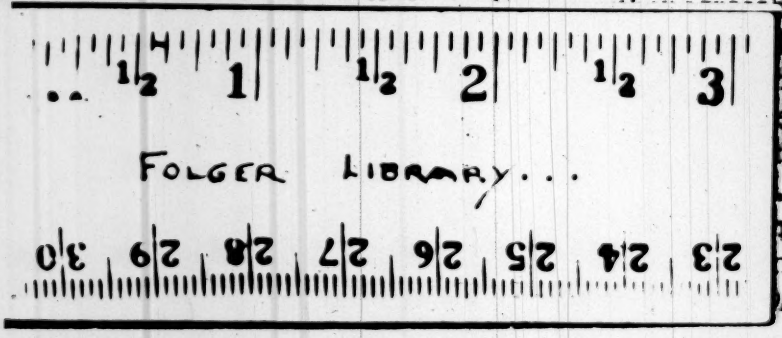
FINIS.

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FINIS.

A

FREE and IMPARTIAL

CENSVRE

Of The

PLATONICK

PHILOSOPHIE

Being a Letter Written to his much Honoured Friend Mr *N. B.*

By *SAM. PARKER. A.M.*
afterwards Bishop of Oxford. died 1688.



OXFORD,
Printed by *W. Hall*, for *Richard Davis*,
Ann. Dom. 1666.

To the Reverend

Dr. BATHURST,

The Worthy and Learned

PRESIDENT

Of *TRINITY COLLEDGE* in

OXFORD.

I Shall not need (as the Cuſtome is) to argue the decency and fitneſs of this addreſs, nor to excuſe its many nice and critical Soleciſmes, becauſe your abſolute and unalienable Right to all the Fruits of my Studies has made it due and neceſſary; (and the Obligations of Duty cancel all the Laws of Indecency) ſo that if to preſent you with ſo mean a trifle be unhandſome, yet not to have done it, would have been unjuſt. For my Studies (Sir)

are too deeply indebted to your Incouraging Directions, to make any other repayment then by entirely resigning themselves up into your hands, and therefore I cannot alienate any thing that's theirs, from being Yours, without being guilty at once of the greatest Injustice and Ingratitude. So that though I do but Injure your Name by concerning its Authority in behalf of so worthless a Trifle, yet an Injury that's the result of Duty and Gratitude, may hope for not only your Pardon, but (such Sir is your Candour) your Acceptance too; since you cannot suspect the Reality of my Resentments, when I decline not so Criminal an Evidence thereof, and rather wilfully chose to commit any Faults and Indecencies then lose the least Opportunity to prove it.

I will not be so troublesome as to remind you of the retaile of your Obligations, yet there is one, whose peculiar matchlesness obliges me to as peculiar an acknowledgment. For to your prevailing advice (Sir) do I owe my first Rescue from the Chains and Fetters of an unhappy Education, then which 'twas impossible either for you to have conferred, or for me to have received a greater benefit, there being no Perfection to be Valued at so high a Rate as a true Freedome and Ingenuity of Mind: 'Tis this, that distinguishes Churches from Heards. And those men that have laid aside the free and impartial use of their Reasons, are just as fit for Religion as Sheep

and

and Oxen, for they differ only in this, that the one are Brutes without Reason, and the other Brutes with it. How could the Scythian have sacrificed Rational Beings, had he not first sacrificed his Reason; or the Egyptian adored Irrational Creatures, had not himself been one? Onyons could never have been Deities if Egyptians had been men; but when Reason was once banished the Temples, no wonder if folly and superstition commenced Religion; a stock might be a Deity when the Priest was no more. But (Sir) the excess of my Joy and Zeal tempt me to be impertinent.

Philosophie may perhaps think her self hardly dealt with, to have two of her famousest Sects call'd to the Barre by so mean a Cleark as my self, yet I think I have done them not a little Honour in citing them before so Eminent a Judge, and one so much their Peer in all Sublime Learning and Generositie of Soul; that their great Masters Zeno *and* Plato *might justly Resign the Chair, and yield their Porch and Academy inferior to the Colledge that you Preside. Where the many good foundations, and grounds of Polite Literature, that you alone have laid, may well be thought the only* Talismans *of its present flourishing and prosperous Condition. These Papers therefore which were formed and hatched under your immediate Influences, being to take their flight abroad into the World, ought to be legitimated by no other*

then

then that Sun, which has always shined so favourably upon all my Endeavours. I cannot but acknowledge that (Sir) *I have one selfish design in this Epistolary Address; namely, to bribe your affection that it may defend me from the Power of your Judgment. 'Tis a very unusual request I confess, but yet 'tis mine at present, that you would be pleased to Protect me from your self; For I here offer to your sight that Paper which (did I not know your Candor to be proportion'd to your other Accomplishments) I could even wish might escape it. And thus* (Sir) *by prefixing your Name to this Pamphlet, I have not onely Rescued it from your own Judgment, and the Contempt of others, but have also in some measure gratified my own Pride, in that as many as shall chance by the sight thereof, to understand that there's such a thing as I in the world, may withal be informed of the Honour and Happiness I have in being*

Reverend Sir,

Your most Faithful, most obliged, and most humble Servant,

SAM: PARKER.

A Free and Impartial

ACCOVNT

OF THE

PLATONICK PHILOSOPHIE.

SIR,

WE that are so inconsiderate, as to print Books, sell our selves into the greatest *Slavery* in the world, being thereby exposed to the severe commands of those that know us, and severer lashes of those that know us not: so that you may perhaps sooner expect to find me in a *Venetian Gally* then in the Press again. Not as if I were either so little a Philosopher, as to regard other mens Censures, (for I have too little esteem for the Generality of Mankind, to be at all concern'd how they esteem of me; and you know 'tis one of my greatest designes in this world, to be one of the most unconcern'd men in it,) or so little your Friend, as to stile your commands Burthens: yet, (to be

plain with you upon the warrant of our Philoſophick Friendſhip) had they not ſurpriſed me at a very ſeaſonable time, I had ſent you no other reply, then either of Excuſe, or flat Denyal: For, though I was then addreſſing my ſelf to ſome *Mathematical Studies*, to the purſuance whereof I allotted the next portion of time, yet the main of my Studies for ſome weeks before had been employ'd in *Platonick Authors*, ſo that both my Brain and my Papers being well ſtuffed with *Ideas*, I was not diſpleaſed with the oportunity you have given me of Venting the one, and Methodizing the other.

The Task then you enjoyn me, is, To give an account of two Paſſages in my *Tentamina Phyſico-Theologica*; The one out of the laſt Chapter of the firſt Book, in which I exclaim againſt the *Platonick* Philoſophy, as an ungrounded and Fanatick Fancy: The other out of the laſt Chapter of the ſecond Book, where diſputing againſt thoſe that aſſert the neceſſity of the Worlds *Eternal Exiſtence*, I was occaſionally obliged, to glance upon the two grand Attributes of Gods *Dominion* and *Goodneſs*; hence you enjoyn me to make good my charge againſt *Plato* by giving you a larger, and more particular account of his Phyloſophie, and to ſend you a further Explication of the Nature and Extent of the forementioned *Attributes*, eſpecially, as they have reference to the lately reviv'd *Hypotheſis* of the *Preexiſtence* of

Souls

Souls, ſeeing I have there reckoned that up among other raſh and unwarrantable opinions, which ſome men think to maintain from the Nature of Gods goodneſs; together with a ſpecial account of the groundleſneſs of the *Hypotheſis* it ſelf.

But if (*Sir*) I now pay one part of this Debt, I owe to your Commands, I may ſafely preſume upon your Candor for a forbearance of the other half; becauſe (as I have often told you) although the Recreation, I ſometimes take to frame my Thoughts and Conceptions into words, almoſt equals the Raviſhing delight I derive from their firſt Births and Diſcoveries, yet too long a continuance at this imployment is to me (and I believe to moſt men elſe) the moſt tedious and weariſome piece of Drudgerie in the world; ſo that if after this payment in part, you will but grant me a ſhort reſpite to refreſh my ſelf with a little Varietie, I do here engage to diſcharge the whole Debt, when ever you ſhall demand it. At preſent therefore deferring the latter half of my Task, I ſhall only ſend you as ſatisfactory an account of the *Platonick Philoſophie*, as I am able; and that it may be as full and entire as its brevity will permit: I ſhall conſider it in all its parts, according to the moſt uſual, and perhaps moſt comprehenſive diviſion of Philoſophie into Morality, Logick, Phiſick, and Natural Theologie.

FIrſt then, as for their *Morality*, no *Platoniſt* can ſet an higher eſtimate upon it, then my ſelf; For beſide thoſe uſeful and excellent Notices, which it teaches in common with the *Ethicks* of other Sects, it may challenge a ſignal Preheminence upon ſeveral accounts; as

1. In that the Rules and Directions it preſcribes are Sober and Practicable; it does not flatter men with *Romantick Degrees* of Happineſs, upon fond and fantaſtick Principles, but complies with the conditions of *Humane life*, and neither Promiſes nor Deſignes greater proportions of Felicity, then our preſent Capacities will allow of. The *Platoniſts* were not ſo Vain as to comfort themſelves with high ſtrein'd Paradoxes againſt the convictions of Senſe and Experience: They do not teach us, when we are in the extremity of Pain and Anguiſh, to ſing *Quam ſuave, quam dulce hoc eſt, Quam hoc non curo?* No, but they eſteemed of every thing as they found and felt it, and therefore whatſoever they experienced agreeable to their Natures they put into the Accounts of Good, as on the contrary, whatſoever they found to be a Grievance, they needed no other inducement to convince them of its Evil. Whereas it was the humour of the *Stoicks*, rather to ſtrein for *Parodoxes* and *Braveries* then give practicable Rules of Life:

Life: And therefore it was well observed by some of the *Antients*, that never any man could attain to that height of wisdome, which the *Stoical Philosophie* pretends to. *Stoici eam Sapientiam* (saies *Cicero*) *interpretantur, quam adhuc nemo mortalis est consecutus*; And *Seneca* speaking of a true Stoick; *Fortasse* (says he) *tanquam Phœnix semel anno quingentisimo nascitur*; and then only mentions the single instance of *Cato*. But the last time I had the happiness to Discourse with you, you was sufficiently convinc'd how little the vertue of *Cato*, and the honesty of *Regulus* are to be valued. If you should demand of me an account of the Stoical Principles, they are such as these. That the Beggerly Stoick is the only Rich man, πάντα γὰρ αὐτῷ ἴδιά ἐστιν ἄλλων, because forsooth he is Master of all other mens wealth. That he alone is beautiful, free, and noble, that all other men are ugly sordid slaves. That he alone is Prince and Emperor of the Universe. That he can vie Perfection & Happiness with God Himself; nay *Seneca* blushes not to affirm, *est aliquid quo sapiens antecedat Deum*. That he alone is a true Poet, Orator, Painter, Shoo-maker, Cobler, Taylor, or that himself is good for every thing, and no body else good for any thing. That to kill a Swallow is not a less villanie then *Parricide*. That 'tis as great a vertue to take a flea-biting patiently, at it is to preserve ones Coun-

Epist. 53.

try by the most Gallant and Heroick Actions. That there is as much prudence in lifting up your finger with discretion, as in managing the *Roman Empire*. That he alwayes hath his will, Εὔξαι ὅτι βέλει, πάντα σοι γενήσεται; Wish what you will, and you shall obtaine what you wish: Like old decrepid *Jolaus* in *Euripides*, that by the force of a wish, retrived his youthful Vigour and Spritefulness, &c. After all which, you will think this a Paradox indeed, τὸν σοφὸν οὐ μαίνεσθαι, that 'tis impossible for a Stoick to be mad. So Extravagant are their Principles, that *Plutarch* has made it the Title of one of his Books, ὅτι παραδοξότερα οἱ Στωϊκοὶ τῶν ποιητῶν λέγουσιν, *That the Stoicks talk more Extravagantly then the Poets*. I could quote you many places out of *Lucian* to this purpose against the Stoicks, but then it must only be to shew you how well I am acquainted with his Writings, for he is every where so abusive and bitter in his Satyres, against all sorts of Philosophers, that if his mouth be any slander, they must have been a pack of the Vilest Villains that ever breathed, and upon that score I shall wave his Testimony: To proceed therefore,

Whereas it was a *Fundamental Principle* of the Stoicks, to esteem all things out of the power of a mans own will, ἀδιάφορα, *nor good nor evil*, and thence not to reckon Health, Chearfulness, good Name, Wealth, Friends, Sickness, Grief, Disgrace, Poverty,

Poverty, Enemies, into the accounts of Good or Evil. The *Platoniſts*, on the contrary, made their meaſures of Good and Evil, from the obſervations of Senſe and Experience; They therefore went not about to perſwade themſelves that any accident, which they felt to be evil, was ere the leſs ſo, by being placed beyond the reach and command of their own wills; but looking about into the Nature of things, they firſt found that *Man* was a complex and multifarious Being, integrated of Body and Soul, and ſo that his felicity could not be conſummate, if one conſtituent half of him was miſerable: and then, that the body was liable to a thouſand forreign contingencies, which 'tis not in the power of the mind to avoid, but yet that *Vertue* and *Conſideration*, which have the moſt immediate, aud moſt diffus'd influence upon the repoſe and ſatisfaction of man-kind; derive entirely from within a mans ſelf, and depend not at all upon any external occurrencies; whence they concluded, that though the biggeſt portions of our felicity be at our own diſpoſals, yet that it muſt be acknowledged that ſome of the ſmaller parcels thereof are left to Chance, and uncertain Emergencies. And theſe they did not hope (with the Stoicks) to eſcape by a wilful ſenſeleſneſs and ſtupidity, like *Poſidonious*, who when a very importunate fit of the Gout attempted to interrupt his Harangue before *Pompey*, cries out,

Nihil

Nihil agis dolor, quamvis sis molestus, nunquam confitebor te malum esse; The most pathetical Expression of the acuteness of his paine! But the course they took, was to purge their minds of froward popular humours, and to sweeten them with mild and benign Principles; to moderate and command their passions, to furnish themselves with prudence and experience, and then what ever happened, to govern themselves by the Lawes of Wisdom and Moderation: Because, though all the Fountains of contentment are not within, nor do all our joys issue from our own Bowels, yet they receive their cheif tinctures thence: and hereby almost all our happiness is prudently confin'd within the compass of our own minds; for all intellectual endowments (which are our greatest perfection, because they perfect and advance our highest faculties) depend upon our selves, and when the mind is furnished with Vertue & Wisdom, it is able to extract something beneficial to its own Interests, from the most malicious accidents. For every thing having two ends as well as two handles, if a wise man miss the one, he will not fail to hit the other; as he in *Plutarch*, who throwing a stone at a dog, but hit his curst Mother in Law, said, *That he had not mist his Mark.* A Wise man having his *Palladium* deposited within his own bosome, by whatsoever circumstances he is besieged, must needs be secure, if by good, they minister

miniſter to the delights of Temperance, if by bad, they are improved to the intereſts of Patience and Contentedneſs; ſo that though a Wiſe man be obnoxious to the ſpiteful injuries of Fortune, and may be aſſaulted by forreign calamities, yet his mind (his Fort-Royal) is impregnable, and in the middeſt of all diſappointments, its ſerenity ſhines as indiſturbedly as the Lights of *Pharos* in the mid'ſt of Storms and Tempeſts. Hereby you ſee that though many of the ingredients of our happineſs grow not within our ſelves, yet their compoſition being at our diſpoſal, 'tis eaſie, either to add to their good qualities, or to allay their bad ones. But becauſe herein conſiſts the Fundamental difference between the morality of the *Academicks* and *Stoicks*, I will endeavour to aſſert and illuſtrate it a little more clearly, by diſcuſſing the main objection of the Stoicks; which is this,

If (ſay they) our ſatisfaction ſhould depend upon forreign advantages, and any part of our happineſs ſhould be beyond our power, then it being ſuſpended on a thouſand uncertainties, it would both render *Philoſophie* uſeleſs, and the condition of *mankind* unavoidably calamitous and deplorable, in that no body can be maſter of his own ſatisfaction, but muſt be forced to intruſt it with ſo blind and ſo uncertain a thing as *Fortune*, and ſo muſt needs be continually liable to infinite misfortunes, and inceſſant-

ly haraſſed with fears of looſing thoſe things, which are not more neceſſary to his happineſs, then they are uncertain and variable.

Though this objection be pregnantly anſwered by every mans Experience of humane affairs, yet partly becauſe 'tis the main *Baſis* of *Stoiciſm*, and partly becauſe it reflects unhandſomely on the dealings of Providence, ſuppoſing that mankind would be hardly dealt with, if all his Goods be not placed within the confines of his own power, I ſhall endeavour to ſilence it for ever, which I think may be done by theſe enſuing conſiderations.

1. That our Earthly happineſs is never mere and unmixt, but when 'tis pureſt, its diluted with ſome daſhes of miſery.

Οὐκ ἂν γένοιτο χωρὶς ἡδονὰ λύπης,
Αλλ' ἔστι τις σύγκρασις. *Eurip.*

Unallayed ſatisfactions are too Divine to be enjoyed any where, but where the Divinity it ſelfe Reſides: For as to the happineſs of this life, there is no one *ultimate Object* or *ſummum Bonum*, to the Acquiſition whereof all other Goods do but contribute as *Intermedial Inſtruments*, but every thing that Miniſters to our Contentment, is a Portion of our Soveraigne Happineſs, which is nothing elſe but a mans preſent repoſe and ſatisfaction. I can not therefore but commend that Principle of ſome of the *Cyrenaicks*, that neither expected, nor purſued

purſued any other happineſs in this life, beſide what was to be found in every ſingle action and affaire thereof. For all unanimouſly teach, that the *tranquillity* and *ſatisfaction* of the mind, is the Soveraign happineſs of this life, and yet that is onely an act of the mind exerciſed about its preſent objects, and not any diſtinct object thereof: But the Creatures are not repleniſhed with that variety of perfections as to be able to gratifie all our Appetites, much leſs with that infinite fulneſs as to be able to ſatisfie them: for alas! all Created Beings are but ſmall fragments of perfection, which only ſerve to ſupport our Souls, till we arrive at the fruition of that *Object*, whoſe Prerogative it is to be adequate and ſatisfactory to all our deſires and expectations. The Stoicks then forget themſelves, when they think an impoſſibility of being certainly and entirely happy here, ſuch an inſupportable Miſery; when all things in this world are by the unalterable Lawes of Providence imperfect, variable, and ſubject to the Viciſſitudes of Fortune. Now Wiſe men, that conſider the Nature and Inconſtancy of things, will not deſigne to themſelves more raiſed degrees of Bleſſedneſſe, then the World can afford: but will be content to be as happy as their own Capacities, and the preſent Condition of things will permit: and not fruitleſly aſpire to heights

of felicity, which they can never reach.

2. Though ſome ſmaller parcels of our happineſs be beyond the command of our wills, yet the greater Portions thereof are not: for inſtance, all that in which the Stoicks place their whole felicity; and that is pregnant enough of Tranquillity, to render our lives ſedate and comfortable. What though ſome appendages of our happineſs are out of our own reach, if the main body thereof be within it? Sure if Vertue be ſo Soveraign a good, as ſingly to compleat our felicity, it will be ſufficient to ſupport our repoſe in the abſence of ſmaller helps and aſſiſtances; Why then ſhould they deem our eſtate ſo deplorable, when we can be ſecure of our moſt important intereſts, though ſome leſſer concernments be left to the diſpoſal of fortune

3. 'Tis in our power to alleviate and qualifie thoſe evils, which 'tis not in our power to eſcape. What though I can not avoid Sickneſs, Povertie, and Diſgrace, yet I may by prudent reflection avoid being grieved at them, and may improve them to the benefit of Vertue and Wiſdome? The mould of a mans Fortune is in his own hands, though the materials are not. Although a firm and healthful habit of body be exceeding conducive to a chearful Tenor of mind, yet may I be chearful without it, though I might have been much more ſo with it. VVhen I cannot ſuit events to my deſires, I will

ſuit

ſuit my deſires to them, I will compromiſe with thoſe grievances which I cannot ſhun, and thoſe blows of Fortune, I cannot ward off by Prudence, I will dead by meeting them with a hardy courage and reſolution. I know I cannot bend the Laws of nature to my own will, there remains therefore no other remedie then that I ſweeten and mollifie their rigour, by a cheerful and generous complyance with them, and ſo according to that vulgar, but very wiſe ſaying, *Make a Vertue of Neceſſity*: and ſo that metal that's moſt ſolid and generous, is moſt malleable too. But (to diſpatch) methinks it becomes not a *dull Apathiſt* to object that we ſhould be diſquieted with perpetual feares, if any parcel of our happineſs ſhould not be lock'd up within our own breaſts: ſure he might reſolve, when there remain'd no other remedie, to caſt himſelf into an *inſenſible Apathy*. How ever every man that premeditates the nature and uncertainty of things, will neither be ſo ſtupid, as to be ſurpriſed with any diſaſter, nor ſo ſilly as to double it by a fruitleſs anxiety, but will make the beſt of his condition by prudence and diſcretion.

2. A ſecond thing for which I value the *Platoniſts* above all other Philoſophers, is the innocent Gayety and Pleaſantneſs of their Humours. For whether I look into their Principles, or into their lives, I can ſee nothing but what is calme and

cheerful. For beſide that their complexions were generally brisk and ſpritely, the *Genius* of their Philoſophie was free and facetious. It being one of its main principles, That as God had provided ineffable pleaſures for good men in the next world, ſo he had made liberal proviſions for their entertainment in this, and conſequently that this life affords enough to pleaſe, though not to ſatisfie; whence they were willing to enjoy all its innocent pleaſures and ſenſualities, though they thought them not of any great concernment to ſuch as were furniſhed with capacities of riſing above it, and aſpiring to heavenly delights. And thus you may ſee, how at the ſame time a wiſe man may enjoy the world and deſpiſe it too. And from this manly and Philoſophick indifferency of life, reſulted a handſome and generous contempt of death, for they did not ſo much defie it, out of a dogged neglect of life, as ſlite it out of a ſober and Philoſophick uncertainty, whether it were better that they continu'd in their preſent happineſs, or left it to enjoy more pure and generous delights. This was the main ground of *Socrates*'s undaunted conſtancy in reference to death, becauſe whether it were preferable before life, ἄδηλον πᾶσι πλὴν ἢ τῷ Θεῷ, *it was uncertain and ambiguous to all but God alone*, as *Plato* concludes his incomparable Apologie. Τὶς οἶδεν (ſaies *Euripides*) εἰ τὸ ζῆν μὲν κατθανεῖν, τὸ κατθανεῖν δ' ζῆν; *Who knows whether*

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is life to live or dye? To die, is to be born into another world, which every good man may justly presume he shall find better then this. Though the main reason, why they were so willing to bid adieu to this present *Stage of life*, was an eager curiosity to be acquainted with the transactions and *Phœnomena* of the next. And methinks, had I no other Rule to guide my self by, then mere Philosophie, I could willingly play the Platonist in this particular: For though I am neither valiant nor miserable, and am as yet in my green and unexperienced years, and have tasted less of sensual delights, then (I believe) any one plac'd in the same capacities and circumstances with my self (for I have hitherto scarce employ'd any of my senses, but that of seeing) insomuch that though my Palate be not surfeited and cloy'd with the same repeated relishes, nor my Eye quite weary of beholding the same repeated objects, yet I could be highly content (upon the account of a Philosophick curiosity) to leave this present Theatre, that I might enter upon the next, for the delight of being entertain'd with a new Scene of things. *Socrates* having been discoursing of the condition of good men after death adds Ἐγὼ μὲν γὰρ πολλάκις ἐθέλω πεθνάναι, εἰ ταῦτά ἐστιν ἀληθῆ, *In Apolog.* were I but sure of the truth of these things, I would die a thousand deaths, for an experimental knowledge of them. Besides the whole life of man is transacted

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in the ſhort ſpace of 24 hours, in the reſt of his age he does but tread the ſame Stage over and over, the ſame buſineſſes always returning in the ſame compaſs of time. Now any wiſe or generous perſon, that ſhall but reflect upon the beſt ſpent day of his whole life, will ſcarce find the buſineſs of it ſo enticing, as to make him over greedy of more of it. But a man that has been running in this Round ſeveral years, ſhould (methinks) be ſo ſick and weary of doing the ſame things over and over, as to be willing to be at *Reſt*, or at leaſt to change his *Employment*; ſo that though life be no miſery, yet becauſe there may be a ſatiety of it, deaths a priviledge. But for the *Stoicks* (that I may continue the parallel with their only Rivals in mortality) they founded their ſatisfaction upon a ſcornful & Frierly contempt of every thing, & are ſo injurious to their Creator, as to teach that he has provided nothing to entertain his Creatures with, but a few ſuch childiſh empty trifles, as grave men (*i.e.* Stoicks) ſhould ſcorn to taſt, much leſs to feed upon. But though the *Platoniſts* are not ſo impious as to think that God made the world vain, yet they are ſo wiſe and obſerving, as to perceive that it has made it ſelf ſo; and therefore I meet with no Sect raiſed ſo much above the admired and gaudy trifles of the vulgar, as they, nor any more confidently putting the worlds Pomp quite out of countenance by a handſome

handsome and free-spirited disdain, then they; nor any less concern'd in news, and the little transactions of humane affairs; Nor any better entertaining themselves with the various and odd humours of mankind, making dayly Comedies to themselves from the follies and little conceits of the *inconsiderate many*. Thus the spangled & glittering Squire, who came to *Athens* very brave and gallant, with a numerous train of Attendants, supposing himself fine enough to be adored by the *Athenians*, and to be reputed at least a *Demi-God*, was by the discreet and facetious Satyrs of the *Platonick Philosophers* laughed out of his vanity, and reduc'd to discretion and sobriety. And thus the Platonist in *Lucian* raises mirth to himself from the several Acts of the *Play*; now he laughs at the Rich mans displaying his *Purple*, with his troublesome croud of poor-spirited Sycophants; anon pleasing himself with the disturbances and foolish madness of the *Horse-race*; & then with those pretty passages which happen at Funerals and making of Wills; next at the silly pleasures of great Feasts and curious Entertainments; and then at the little tumults & odd contingencys at the *Baths*, &c. But to conclude this head, the *Platonists* were generous souls, that being raised above the little concernments and *under-Shreiveries* of this life (as the *Cardinals of Rome* are pleased to stile all secular employments) sate as unconcern'd spectators, looking

down from aloft, with pity and disdain, upon the odd Carriage of humane affaires. And happy is he

------ *Celsâ qui mentis ab arce*
Despicit errantes, humanaque gaudia ridet.

For no Prospect is so pleasant and delightful to the mind of man, as when he sees all the *world* below *him*, & beholds all others scrambling for aspiring to those things which himself contemns and tramples upon.

3. The third good quality of the *Platonists*, was their valuing *good-nature* at so high a rate, which though it be a constitution no less virtuous and excellent, then 'tis charming and amiable, yet the estimate they set upon it was proportionable to its real value. Whence resulted that exceeding delight they took in the Society of ingenious and sweet-natur'd young Gentlemen, upon which score they professed themselves as great *Votaries* to the *Celestial Venus*, as common Mortals are to the *Earthly one*, for their Amours were not kindled by lust and petulency (they being professedly the most generous contemners of Women in the world) but were pure and cleanly enough to become Angels and separated souls, *Plato*'s Love-Laws forbidding to court any other objects then abstracted and intellectual Beauties. And *Plotinus* makes it the first ascent to wisdome, to be affected with the meer proportions of *Harmony* abstracted from the sensible sound, and

V. Platonis Convivium.

Ennead. 1. l. 3

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to be enamour'd with the features of beauty, without respect to the body, which they render beautiful. And yet hence some have taken occasion to slander *Plato* himself (together with his incomparable master *Socrates*) as guilty of that unnatural beastlinesse of the lustful Sodomites. Although *Plato* at the end of his *Convivium* has said as much to remove all suspicion from *Socrates*, as a matter of this nature is capable of. And himself in his first book of Laws detests and strictly prohibits this πάθος ἀτιμίας *dishonourable impurity* as τὸ παρὰ φύσιν τόλμημα *a most unnatural impudence*. But the forementioned calumny had never gain'd any credit with us, had it not been reported by some of the Ancient Fathers, & yet it is too notorious to dissemble that they were not only very careless in their relations concerning the *Philosophers*, being apparently guilty of innumerable ἁμαρτήματα μνημόνικα, but also in many Instances highly disingenious, insomuch that I find no Prose-writer to agree so much with their reports as *Lucian*, whose main design it was to abuse every body that was grave and sober. Which may a little appear by giving you an account of the original and progress of the forementioned slander. The first Authors then of this and other resembling reports were the *Comick-Poets*, who were persons of a free, droling, and Satyrical humour, and whose chief design in their Comedies, was to abuse men with roguish and

unlucky Stories; whatever was their *Argument*, their *Plot* was always *Satyr*. They therefore who flouriſhed about the time of the *Peloponeſian Warr*, when the government of *Athens* was popular, were wont to traduce the great and rich men of the *City*: But when the *Grandees* were grown too big to be brought upon the Stage (by the alteration of the Government into an *Ariſtocracy*) they betook themſelves to abuſe former Poets, and in that Age, *Homer* was ſufficiently laſhed; but afterwards, when *Philoſophie* began to flouriſh, the Philoſophers (upon every ſmall quarrel that hapned between them and the Poets) were brought upon the Stage, and perſecuted with all their *Satyrs*. And thus this foul charge of Sodomy, wherewith *Socrates* has been ſo loudly impeach'd, was nothing elſe but an abuſive invention of *Ariſtophanes*, who having an implacable picque againſt him, endeavour'd by all means to render him both odious and ridiculous: For *Socrates* being of a grave and ſevere humour did not a little diſ-reliſh the vanity and looſeneſs of the Stage, whereupon *Ariſtophanes* the Poet Laureat of that Age, was ſo netled, that he immediately left the old *Comical Argument* of droling upon former Poets, and ſet himſelf to abuſe the Philoſophers, but eſpecially *Socrates*, all whoſe actions he continually perſecuted with ſharp and unlucky Satyrs. And therefore whereas *Socrates* was wont to take home to himſelf,

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the most ingenious & spritely Youths, he could meet with, to bestow upon them an Education proportionable to their parts, *Aristophanes* (with too much foulness for any Ingenuous Person) represents him as one that pickt up the lovelyest youths, to the foulest and most beastly purposes. And whereas *Socrates* taught, that God was to be sought after in Heaven, and not in their Images. *Aristophanes* perstringes him as one that Worshiped the *Clouds*, and to this end he Wrote his Νεφέλαι only to abuse *Socrates* and his *Gods*. Neither did their Malice rest here, but proceeded to Death and Banishment; for the Poets had the greatest hand in the impeachment of *Socrates*; and *Melitus*, that was his most vehement Accuser, was one of *Aristophanes*'s Players. And a while after (about the CXX. *Olimpiad*) one *Sophocles*, a Pragmatical Fellow of the *Poetick Faction*, procured a Decree for the Banishment of all the Philosophers from *Athens*, which took effect, till at length the Controversie being fairly debated before the Senate, the cause of the Philosophers seem'd so apparently innocent to them, that they immediately caused the Decree to be cancelled, ordered that the Philosophers should be speedily called home, and fined *Sophocles* five Talents. Now, though the Fathers could never meet with any such filthy Relations in sober and impartial Historians, yet because they apprehended (though very

very ineptly) that it made for the Interest of Christianity, that the best men among the Heathens should be but bad enough; rather then be destitute of competent Testimonies against *Socrates*, (the most eminent instance of *Ethnick* Vertue) they would cite them from such as were not only his Enemies, but Poets and Satyrists too; *i. e.* from those who were not onely obliged by their design to abuse all men, especially the wiser and more serious sort, but also were incensed with a peculiar spite and malice against him. Any one therefore that is acquainted with the *Genius* of the *Grecian Comedy* in general, and with this now mentioned Contest of the Philosophers and Comedians in particular, will be far from thinking their Satyres a sufficient Testimony against any mans morality. And therefore some of our modern Criticks are not very kind to the Philosophers, when they think a good part of the Philosophick History is to be collected out of the Ancient Comedians. Having consum'd so many lines in Vindicating our Philosophers chastity, I shall wave adding any farther Evidences of the goodness of their Natures; onely give me leave to throw in this single item thereof, that in the *Platonick History* you may meet with more instances of true Philosophick & Heroick Friendship, then in all the world beside. They were indeed generally somewhat too fond of their Friends, & it was their expressing

ſing the offices of Friendſhip and Good-Nature (by way of Alluſion) in amorous terms, that gave too much ground for the forementioned ſlander.

And now (Sir) how much will this Excellent Quality recommend them to our eſteem, when we conſider at how high a rate our Bleſſed Saviour himſelf valued it? If we look into his Laws, what are they but ſo many injunctions to the ſeveral inſtances of *good nature*, Mildneſs, Patience, Mercifulneſs, Humility, Candor, Ingenuity? His new and peculiar Precept is, That we ſhould love one another, and be kind not onely to Friends, but Enemies. And therefore a peeviſh ill-natur'd Chriſtian, is the greateſt contradiction in the World. Peeviſhneſs being the greateſt reproach and weakneſs of humane Nature, and moſt contrary to the temper of the Divine Mind: So that they, who, not long ſince, were wont to diſcourſe, that the Saints or People of God (*i. e.* That ſort of people who can be Devout and Godly, without being Vertuous) are indeed peeviſh here, but in Heaven this imperfection ſhall be removed, might as well have told us, that the Saiuts are *Drunkards* here, but in Heaven they ſhall be Temperate; the Saints are *Cheats* and *Knaves* here, but in Heaven they ſhall be Honeſt; the Saints are *Adulterers* here, but in Heaven they ſhall be Chaſt; for an habitual Peeviſhneſs is as inconſiſtent with the deſign of Chriſtianity, as the

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ſins of an habitual diſhoneſty, Drunkenneſs, and Adultery. And then if we look into our Saviours life, the unparallel'd civility and obligingneſs of his Deportment, ſeems to be almoſt as high an Evidence of the Truth and Divinity of his Doctrine, as his unparallel'd Miracles were; For 'tis altogether unimaginable that ſo ſweet-natur'd a Perſon ſhould be ſuch a baſe and profligate Impoſtor, as he muſt have been, if he had been one. And among all his Favourites, it was the Gentle and ſweet-natur'd St. *John* that was his darling Diſciple; whilſt we often find him checking *Peters* rude and unmannerly Zeal.

But all this while, by *good Nature*, I do not barely deſign a ſweet Complexion and temperament of Body, (though that is an happy advantage to Vertue) but ſuch a Divine and Gracious temper of Mind as produces a ſincere kindneſs and benevolence towards all men. 'Tis the faireſt Character and Imitation of the Deity, that diſtributes his Bounty to all, and like his own Sun, ſhines upon the Juſt and Unjuſt. 'Tis a *Catholick Charity* that enfolds the whole world in the Arms of love and kindneſs. Only there are ſome perſons of ſuch peviſh and ſelf confined Spirits, that will not ſuffer themſelves to be embraced by thoſe, whoſe unbounded embraces equally comprehend all, and diſdain to be but the partial objects of an impartial Love.

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Theſe men confine the *diſplays* of their love and tenderneſs, within the narrow and contracted *Circumference* of a ſmall party, and Excommunicate the reſidue of Mankind as unworthy their charity, and think it a great pollution to entertain any kind thoughts for any beſides themſelves, confining the Elect within the walls of *Rome* or *Geneva*: Now againſt ſuch teſty and irregular Spirits, the ſweeteſt Natures have the greateſt Antipathies, not from any malice or bitterneſs againſt their Perſons, but from a true Zeal, for largneſs and ingenuity of Spirit, and a real hatred againſt all thoſe Peſtilent qualities that tend to ſupplant or deſtroy it. Whence the *Bleſſed Jeſus* (who was the higheſt and moſt matchleſs Patterne of all the Inſtances of Good-Nature) was remarkably ſharp and ſevere in his Invectives againſt the Phariſees; becauſe theſe Ill-natured Fellows deſpiſed and ſcorned all that were not of their Sect, endeavouring to confine all Goodneſs to their own Faction, and looking upon the reſt of Mankind, as a rout of vile and worthleſs Reprobates. Now, though our Saviour could win and oblige *Publicans* and *Harlots*, (perſons of the moſt debauch't and looſeſt lives) by his mild and ſweet Deportment, yet when He had to do with theſe holy Phariſaical Zelots, his uſual Language was, *Ye Scribes and Phariſees, Hypocrites, ye are of your Father the Devil.* There be-

ing nothing more hateful to God, then a high pretender to Religion, void of Charity and true Goodneſs.

I have heard ſome men (of a bitter and envious Complexion, that have too much Gall to have the Innocence of Doves, and that through the bitterneſs of their own Spirits, cannot relliſh the ſweetneſs of Good-Nature) enveigh againſt the advancing of Good-Nature, as if it were a more neat and ſecret deſigne of undermining the Intereſts of Religion, and advancing thoſe of Atheiſm. A Calumny as abſurd as 'tis impious: For how can that undermine Religion, which is its prime intendment? Can any deſigne be injur'd or defeated by its intrinſick and proper end? And what more evident, then that one of the main purpoſes of Chriſtianity, is to ſweeten and refine our Natures? What does our Lawgiver more vehemently and frequently urge, then Meekneſs, Mercifulneſs, Humility, and other reſembling Inſtances of Good-Nature? What bids greater defiance to the genuine Spirit of Chriſtianity, then rude, churliſh, and ungentile Peeviſhneſs? What more lovely in the *Bleſſed Jeſus* then the ſweetneſs and obligingneſs of his Converſation? What did he ever more inveigh againſt, then an uncivil and Phariſaical Zeal, howſoever otherwiſe ſincere and cordial? ſo that if to urge upon men the practice of Good-natur'd Qualities

lities be to ſupplant Chriſtianity, then Chriſtianity muſt ſupplant and contradict it ſelf.

But men have unhappily of late Chriſtned a ſort of ſulphureous and Fanatique fire, by the name of Zeal: And when once their minds are tainted and enraged by this hot devotional Zeal, 'tis as natural to them to be rude and baſe-natur'd, as 'tis to Dogs and Tigres. Zeal is a fire in the Soul, which unleſs qualified and ſlaked by meekneſs and a calm nature, doth not only prey upon the mind, and devour its intellectual Powers, and enflame all the Paſſions, but its rage breaks forth, and ſets whole States and Kingdoms into a combuſtion, and reduces the whole World to Aſhes; the greateſt Zealots always proving the greateſt Incendiaries; ſo that what *Homer* ſayes of the *Syrian* Star, is not more true of any thing then this fiery Zeal,

Λαμπρότατος μὲν ὁγ' ἐσι, κακὸν δέ τε σῆμα τέτυκται, *Iliad.* χ.
Καὶ τε φέρει πολλὸν πυρετὸν δειλοῖσι βροτοῖσι.

4. A fourth preheminence of the *Platoniſts* (that I may inſiſt on no more) is their readineſs & ability in the ſmaller Morals, by which I mean their skill in all the Arts of behaviour and converſation. For though I have ſufficiently experienced a modeſt ſhamefacedneſs, and uncoothneſs in ceremonial addreſſes, to be the natural and unavoidable reſults of privacy, (as all Metals contract ruſt by lying) yet the *Platoniſts*, notwithſtanding their contemplative

retiredneſs, were not inferior to the moſt poliſhed Courtiers, in the neatneſs and complaiſance of their Deportment. Which I am apt to aſcribe chiefly to the readineſs and pregnancy of their Fancies; for though a ſound and ſteddy Judgment (which rarely goes in company with ſubtil and flaſhy imaginations) is the moſt uſeful and commanding ability in buſineſſe, yet 'tis the quick and ſpritely fancy that takes and commands moſt in converſe. A ſtrong ready wit, with a bold and plauſible Tongue, ſhall win more reſpect and reputation, then all other more valuable and emproving accompliſhments, if wanting theſe advantages. Beſides, they did not ſpend all their time and diligence in Bookiſhneſs, which renders Schollars ſoft, ſilly, unexperienced things, but propoſing to themſelves ability and judgment in buſineſs, as one main end of Study; they rather uſed their Learning, then admired it, according to that Aphoriſm of my Lord *Bacon*, *Crafty men contemn ſtudies, ſimple men admire them, & wiſe men uſe them.* But the main ground of their good-meen, was their being bleſt with all the advantages of nature & education. Were it not too tedious to run through the whole ſucceſsion of the *Academy* from the firſt riſe thereof to its utmoſt period, it would not be difficult to repreſent to you, how every member thereof ſuperinduced to a pure complexion, and a gentile education the advantages of Travel and ſevere Study; and

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what more could be desired to compleat them in all the Realities and Ornaments of Humane Nature? As *Plato* himself was of so well-temper'd a complexion, that he chose an unhealthy place of residence, for a check and revulsion to his too high and luxuriant habit of Body, and yet liv'd to a great age unacquainted with sickness and diseases, and at last this Socratick Swan expired insensibly in a pleasant contemplation: *Est etiam* (saies *Cicero*) *quietæ & puræ atque eleganter actæ ætatis placida ac lenis senectus, qualem accepimus Platonis, qui uno & octuagessimo ætatis anno scribens mortuus est.* And then for his Parentage, though I do as little credit that he was begot either by *Apollo* or by a *Spectre* in his shape, as I do that he was born of a *Virgin Mother* (and yet both are reported by many Authors, and seem to be believed by more) yet 'tis past doubt that his extraction was from two of the most Antient and most Noble Families in *Athens*, his Mother *Perictione* being of the race of *Solon*, and his Father *Aristo* of the Family of the *Codri*. And then for his Education he was no Athenian Cockney, but was *Socrates*'s darling favourite, Travelled into all parts of the Learned World, resided a considerable time in the Court of *Dionysius*, where he was both admired and envied by the Courtiers for the unaffected Gracefulness of his addresses, and some say the reason why he received so bad usage from the *Tyrant*,

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was that he excell'd him so far in all the Arts and charms of conversation, that he seem'd to be almost as much respected and admired as himself. For he knew how to be facetious without being vaine or trifling, & how to be serious without being soure or morose, his behaviour was alwaies mild and courteous, his humour alwaies cheerful and uniform, and his gravity at an equal distance from morosenes & vanity; to be brief, he was entirely adorn'd with all the accomplishments that can command either love or honour. And then for *Plotinus*, his deportment (as *Porphyrie* relates in his life) was so gentile that his Audience was composed of a confluence of the Noblest and most Illustrious Personages in *Rome*; his integrity so eminent, that he was deputed over-seer to most of their Wills, and Arbitrator in most of their Controversies, and yet mannaged all with that Candor, Prudence, and Sincerity, as that he neither lost one Friend, nor Purchased one Enemy in five and twenty years Residence at *Rome*, For the rest of his life consult *Porphyrie* and *Eunapius*. For the life of *Porphyrie*, I refer you to *Eunapius*, but yet I cannot omit this single instance of the goodnes of his humour, that after an obstinate conflict, and many reiterated controversial Rencounters with *Amelius*, as soon as he was convinced that *Truth* and *Amelius* stood together, he neither scrupled to make a Publick Recantation

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then, nor to record it to Posterity, that himself was bafled (as he has done in the Life of *Plotinus*) then which we scarce know a greater instance of an Heroick Candour. For *Proclus* consult his Scholar *Marinus the Neopolitan*, and *Philostratus the younger De vitis Sophistarum* (I say the younger, because he was Nephew to him that wrote the History of *Apollonius Tyanæus*, though they be usually confounded upon the Authority of that careless Rhapsodist *Suidas*, who has been the Author of infinite other resembling mistakes) lastly consult *Eunapius* for the lives of *Ædesius*, *Iamblicus*, *Sopater*, (*Constantines* unhappy favourite) *Eustathius*, and his eminent wife *Sosipatra* (of whom so many strange stories are reported,) *Crispus* one of *Julian*'s Courtiers, a man of eminent prudence and policy, *Oribasius*, *Julians* Physician, *Maximus* and *Chrysanthius* his great Favourites, the former whereof, was an eminent Courtier during the time of *Julian*'s Reign, & afterwards (I fear too much) an instance of Christian Cruelty and Revenge; though the generous *Chrysanthius* could never be courted from his Philosophick retirements by all the Emperours importunity: *Proæresius*, who was so famous an Orator, that the City of *Rome* erected to him a publick Statue of Brass with this inscription, *Regina Rerum Roma, Regi Eloquentiæ*. *Hephæstion*, *Himerius*, *Libanius*, *Nymphidianus*, *&c.* and you will find them such a

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ſucceſſion of Gentile, Vertuous, and Generous Perſons, that the *Ethnick* world cannot ſhew the like. To theſe I might add the novel reſtorers of *Platoniſm*; for as the *Platonick* ſucceſſion expired not long after the reign of *Julian*, having received its mortal wound from *Conſtantine*, who diſſolved their Scholes and diſperſed their Profeſſors; ſo about the fourteenth *Centurie*, it began to revive and to wreſtle with *Ariſtotle*'s Philoſophie: for ſome of the *Grecian Prelates*, that then ſate in the *Council of Florence* (call'd to reconcile the *Greek* and the *Latine* Churches) ſeeing all other Philoſophie quite daſhed out of Countenance in theſe Weſtern Parts by the *Ariſtotelian*, they were not a little zealous to reſtore that of *Plato*, whence aroſe the diſputes between *Georgius Trapezuntius*, and *Georgius Scholarius* on the behalf of *Ariſtotle*, and *Beſſarion* Biſhop of *Nice*, (made Cardinal for his eminent ſervices in the Council) and *Gemiſtus Pletho* on the behalf of *Plato*. But *Pletho* getting into favour with *Laurentius Coſmo* the great Duke, inſpired him with ſuch a mighty zeal for the Platonick Philoſophie, that he immediately devoted young *Ficinus* (Son to one of his chiefeſt Phiſicians) to its Reſtauration, and educated him accordingly; and invited that worthy Heroe *Johannes Picus* the Earle of *Mirandula*, *Georgius Veſpuſius*, *Chriſtophorus Landinus*, *Angelus Politianus*, and others to *Florence*, where they erected an Academie.

Which

Which, with much more, you may meet with in the extant Epiſtles of the Earl of *Mirandula*, *Marſilius Ficinus*, and *Angelus Politanus*. But I proceed, though the *Platoniſts* could Artificially conform their Behaviour to the more refined and Gentile ſort of Men, yet as for that ſalvage Beaſt, the Popular Rout, they valued no more to pleaſe them, then to gratifie Wolves or Tigres; for really (Sir) folly is ſo moulded into the Conſtitution of the common and mechanical ſort of men, that that Philoſopher muſt be well-nigh as abſurd as they, who ſuppoſes them capable of wiſdom, when they have ſcarce wit or judgment enough to think a thought, that is not inept and ridiculous. Their childiſh and froward humour is not unhandſomely diſplayed by *Charon*. 'All that they think is Vanity, all 'that they ſay is falſe and erroneous; that they re-'prove is good, that they approve is naught; that 'which they praiſe is infamous, that which they 'do and undertake is folly. So that 'tis not poſſible for any man, who aſpires to wiſdom, to condeſcend to any compliance with their baſe and abſurd humours. And therefore theſe Sons of wiſdome were [illegible]regardleſs of them, as of Apes and Baboons.

But now for the *Stoicks*, their Converſation was inſolent and ſupercilious, their looks affected and artificial, their Deportment was ſuch a ſoure and

moroſe behaviour, as the vulgar ſtile gravity. And I think *Joſephus* was not much miſtaken, when he deſcrib'd the rude and ill-natur'd *Phariſees* by comparing them with the Stoicks, ἡ Φαρισαίων (ſayes he, deſcribing his own Sect) αἵρεσις παραπλήσιός ἐστι τῇ παρ' Ἕλλησι στοϊκῇ λεγομένῃ. For as the ſupercilious Phariſees accounted their own Sect the only School of Sanctity, ſo the Stoicks eſteem'd themſelves the onely Sons of wiſdom, and all others Children, Fools, and Madmen. I might both evidence theſe things by ſeveral particular inſtances, and add ſeveral other Prerogatives of the *Platonick Morality*, but becauſe I fear I have more need to beg your pardon for having been already ſo tedious, I ſhall onely tell you, that you may find the faireſt and exacteſt Idea and Picture thereof in the Life and Precepts of *Socrates*, the ſeveral lineaments of which lie ſcattered and diffuſed in *Plato*'s Writings, but are pretty handſomly collected into one Table in a late *French* diſcourſe of Mr. *Julien Davion*, Entitled, *Le Crayon du Chriſtianiſme en la Philoſophie de Socrate*.

And now I proceed to the next part of my Task, their *Logick*, of which my cenſure is briefly this, That as *Plato*'s manner of arguing is more ſuccinct then the tedious way of Syllogiſing, ſo 'tis not leſs ſure and evident; for what diſcourſe can pro-

proceed with greater evidence and conviction, then after you have explain'd the Terms of the Question, and agreed with your Adversary about the matter debated of, to propose to him some Principles so clear and palpable, that they shall either presuppose or enforce his assent, and from thence to lead him by *Induction* through a series of propositions depending upon and orderly deduced from your first *Proleptick Principles*, till he is fairly brought or unawares betrayed into an unavoidable necessity of assenting to the Truth you assert? Which is the method that *Plato* pretends to. I must confess that arguing by *Syllogismes* is more sutable to Youths and Novices in Reason, but 'tis far more Elegant and Manly, to mannage a few short Interrogatories with that dexterity and strength of Reason, as thereby to distress your Adversary so far, as to force him either to Seal to your Opinion, or to retract his own former concessions: For in the former Method, the Disputant moves on by slow Progressions, and takes a great compass about to approach and get up to his Enemy; but in the latter his motion is quick and nimble, and the engagement so direct and smart, that it cannot be closely pursued, but by Persons very expert and knowing in the Art and Laws of Reasoning.

But some that make the best Laws, are not al-

wayes their beſt obſervers. Thus though *Plato*'s diſcourſings about practical matters are exceeding handſome and pertinent, yet when he treats of ſpeculative Notions, his rules of arguing could not be more ſtrict, cloſe, and exact, then his Argumentations were wide, loſe, and incoherent: When *Patricius* confidently aſſerts *Plato*'s demonſtrations in his *Parmenides* to be ſo ſtrong and undeniable, *Ut nullæ tales apud Mathematicum ullum reperiantur*; I commend his confidence, but dare not contradict his aſſertion, becauſe I think it unhandſome to contradict in a matter, which I dare not be very confident I underſtand. But when *Cardinal Beſſarion* aſſerts, *Totum Platonis Timæum ex ſyllogiſmis demonſtrativis conſtare*; I who have read over that diſcourſe with as much caution and attention as I could, dare (by the Cardinals leave) pronounce that there is not one demonſtrative ſyllogiſme in the whole Book; nay that there is not one true and valid Argument, but that the whole diſcourſe is weak and incoherent: And (to ſpeak out plainly) that Perſon will much oblige me, that ſhall direct me to one material ratiocination about *ſpeculative Theories* in all *Plato*'s Writings, where I cannot ſhew him ſome manifeſt flaw or other. For they either (1.) bottome upon uncertain and inevident Principles, as they generally do; but becauſe there can be no certainty in the con-

In his Plato Exotericus.

Adv. Calum. l. 1. c. 5.

concluſion, without a certainty in the premiſes, and the certainty of intermediate propoſitions depends upon the firſt, if that be uncertain, the whole trayn of Inferences deduced from it, (though aptly connected to each other) muſt needs be ſo too. Or elſe (2.) they are circular, as in his *Meno* he bottomes the Souls Reminiſcency of thoſe Ideas, it converſed with in a former ſtate, upon its preſuppoſed Immortality; and yet in his *Phædo*, he fairly argues for the Souls Immortality from its preſuppoſed Reminiſcency. And any one that peruſes his Writings warily, will find them to abound with infinite ſuch Circles. Or (3.) he wanders into matters remote and impertinent to the Subject and Argument of his Diſcourſe, roving into diſputes of a quite diſtant nature from the Queſtion in debate; or beating about through wild, intricate and uncertain Ambages, or taking a wide and tedious compaſs to purſue and drive a trivial word into its proper ſignification. Though perhaps this charge will admit of an Apologie. Becauſe moſt of his diſputes were mannaged againſt the *Sophiſts* of that age, who made it their whole buſineſs to maintain wrangles by tricks and ſhifts of words, and therefore whoever undertook to diſpute againſt them, muſt of neceſſity be ingaged in word quarrels. And hence it was that *Plato* does almoſt every where take ſuch large compaſſes meerly to vindicate the ſigni-

ſignification of a ſingle word againſt their idle cavils, and though ſometimes he may purſue his task preſly and coherently, yet becauſe of the ſmall importance of the matter debated of, his diſcourſe muſt needs be both very tedious and not very profitable. Or elſe (5.) there is ſome flaw and incoherence in ſome of the intermediate propoſitions, which muſt needs marre the chain of his whole Diſcourſe: For the certain knowledge of *Conſequences* is only *conditional*, and ſuppoſes the Truth of *Premiſes*, ſo that where any Propoſition is falſe, there the coherence ceaſes, and all concluſions that follow it are abſurd, becauſe incoherent. But if I ſhould give you a *Catalogue* of his Circular arguings, incoherences, contradictions, non-conſequences, and all other violations of the *Laws of Reaſoning*, I muſt ſend you a Volumn as vaſt as his. And beſides it would not be leſs fruitleſs then tedious, and might ſeem to aim at no other deſign, but merely his diſparagement. But yet that you may not ſuſpect me of raſhneſs in drawing up ſo big a charge againſt ſo eminent a perſon without being able to *back* it with a proportionable evidence, I ſuppoſe it will not be impertinent to give you a competent proof of it, if I can perform it without being tedious. Which may be done by propoſing one inſtance and referring you to an Author, that will ſupply you with infinite more, if you think it worth the while to examine them. The Inſtance I

ſhall

ſhall give you, is the known and famous Argument for the Souls Immortality in his *Phædrus*. πᾶσα ψυχὴ ἀθάνατος· τὸ γὰρ ἀεικίνητον, ἀθάνατον· τὸ δ' ἄλλο κινοῦν, καὶ ὑπ' ἄλλου κινούμενον, παύλαν ἔχον κινήσεως, παῦλαν ἔχει ζωῆς· μόνον δὴ τὸ αὐτὸ κινοῦν, ἅτε οὐκ ἀπολεῖπον ἑαυτό, ἔποτε λήγει κινούμενον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ὅσα κινεῖται, τοῦτο πηγὴ καὶ ἀρχὴ κινήσεως· ἀρχὴ δὲ ἀγένητον· ἐξ ἀρχῆς γὰρ ἀνάγκη πᾶν τὸ γιγνόμενον γίγνεσθαι, αὐτὸν δὲ μηδ' ἐξ ἑνός· εἰ γὰρ ὂν τῦ ἀρχὴ γίγνοιτο, οὐκ ἂν ἐξ ἀρχῆς γιγνοιτο· ἐπεὶδὴ δὲ ἀγένητον ὂν καὶ ἀδιάφθορον αὐτὸ ἀνάγκη εἶ· ἀρχῆς γὰρ ἀπολυμένης, ἅτε αὐτή ποτε ὂν τῦ ἅτε ἄλλο ἐξ ἐκείνης γενήσεται· οὕτω δὲ ἐξ ἀρχῆς δεῖ τὰ πάντα γίγνεσθαι ἅτω δὴ κινήσεως μὲν ἀρχὴ, τὸ αὐτὸ κινοῦν· τοῦτο δὲ ἂτ' ἀπόλλυσθαι, ἅτε γίγνεσθαι δυνατόν· ἢ πάντατε ἀναγκαῖον, πᾶσαν τε γῆν συμπεσοῦσαν στῆναι, καὶ μήποτε αὖθις ἔχειν σῆναι ὁθεν κινηθέντα γενήσεσθ· ἀθανάτε δὲ πραγμάτε τῦ ὑφ' ἑαυτῦ κινουμένε, ψυχῆς οὐσίαντε καὶ λόγον τοῦτο αὐτό πε λέγειν ἐκ αἰσχυνεῖσθ. The ſence of which words is fully and more plainly contained in this Analyſis, *The Soul is always in motion; that which is always in motion, is ſelf moving; that which is ſelf-moving, is never deſerted of it ſelf; that which never deſerts it ſelf, never ceaſes to move; that which never ceaſes to move, is the ſource and origine of all motion; that which is the ſource of all motion has no beginning; and that which has no beginning can have no ending.* To omit that every Propoſition is either falſe, or uncertain, or incoherent, as your ſelf will eaſily obſerve, judge whether we are not likely to have a mighty proof of the Souls immortality, when it muſt be reſolved into its own ſelf-ſubſiſtence.

The Author I ſhall refer you to, is *Johannes Baptiſta*

Baptista Crispus his *Quinarius Primus de Ethnicis Philosophis caute Legendis.* 'Tis a Book of no small bulk, containing above 500 *pages in folio*, and yet the main business of it is to display the defectiveness of *Plato*'s arguings: Where you may be supplyed with infinite apparent & palpable instances thereof if you will be at the pains to read and consider them. We might possibly have had a better *account* in *Theopompus* his Book κατὰ τῆς Πλάτωνος διατριβῆς, of which thus *Athenæus* 11. 15. Θεόπομπος ὁ Χῖος ὁν τῷ κατὰ τῆς Πλάτωνος διατριβῆς τοὺ πολλοὺς φησι δεῖν διαλόγων ἀυτῷ ἀχρείους καὶ ψευδεῖς ἂν τις εὕροι. Αλλοτρίους δὲ τοὺ πλείους ὄντας ὁν δεῖ Αἰσχίνου διατριβῶν, ἐνίους δὲ Ἀντισθένους, πολλοὺς δὲ καὶ τοῦ Βρύσωνος τοῦ Ἡρακλεώτου. *Theopompus in his Book against the Platonick Discipline and Institution, maintains that a great many of Plato's Dialogues are trifling and false, and that many others of them are stoln out of the Discourses of Aristippus, or Antisthenes, or Bryson of Heraclea.*

After this brief account of *Plato*'s *Logick*, I come now to his *Natural Philosophie*, in which I shall endeavour all possible brevity, because this part, as well as the former, doth not so directly concern my present design, the intendment of my charge being chiefely against his *Natural Theologie*. But that my Discourse may be entire in all its parts, and regular in its method, I shall to my account of his Logick cast in this of his Physiologie. Which will be sufficiently display'd and disparaged too, by telling

you

you that in its main strokes it accords with the *Aristotelean Philosophie*; a parallel between them was asserted and demonstrated by *Ammonius*, *Porphyrie*, *Hierocles*, and others of the sacred succession among the Ancients, and among Modern Writers has been attempted by *Foxius*, *Carpentarius*, *Marronius*, *Buratellus* and others. The Retail of instances you may see in them, but he that tells you in gross that they agree in one Principle, by which alone they solve all the appearances and productions of Nature, tells you all. For as *Aristotle* resolves all *Phænomena* into his *Forms*, (which he starts from the Bosome of matter) so *Plato* solves all by the *Soul of the Universe* and *Ideas*, (which in Greek are all one with *Forms*.) For the *Mechanical Hypotheses* having been probably advanced to a considerable Grandeur by *Leucippus* and *Democritus* (of whom *Plato* makes not any mention in all his Writings) and other Ancient *Vertuosi*, these two great and ambitious Wits, *Plato* and *Aristotle*, designing a Philosophical Empire to themselves scorn'd to be so meanly employ'd, as only to improve other mens principles, and therefore endeavoured to amuse the world with new ones, which they knew others could as little confute, as themselves could prove, by reason of their obscurity and remoteness from sence. How little *Aristotle* intended his *Forms* should be understood is already

V. Phot. eclog. CCLI.

infinitely notorious, and how little mind *Plato* had that it ſhould be ever known what kind of Thing his *Univerſal Soul* is, is as notoriouſly apparent from his deſcriptions of it, which are nothing elſe but ſome odd fantaſtick Schemes of numerical figures and proportions, as you may ſee in both the *Timæus*'s; where 'tis highly pleaſant to read how ſeriouſly he preſcribes the Method of its Compoſition out of numerical Ingredients. Take (ſaith he) all the numbers which make up Muſical proportions, as *Diapaſons*, *Diapente*'s, *Diateſſerons*, and an infinite number more, but be eſpecially careful not to omit the double τετρακτὺς, that which ariſes by even proportions, as 1, 2, 4, 8, &c. and that whoſe proportions run into odd numbers, as 1, 3, 9, 27, &c. Mix and pound them together with all poſſible exactneſs, and if you find any void ſpaces between the even and odd numbers, fill them with the ſmalleſt λείμματα (which are ſome very fine and minute fragments) and when you have wrought all exceeding exactly into the ſhape of the Letter *I*, divide it in the middle long ways into two equal parts, croſs them in the form of the Letter *X*, and be ſure to faſten them very ſtrongly at the Commiſſure, and then bow all four joynts, till at length you make them ſo pliable, as to bring them into a Spherical figure, and then 'tis brought to a right Animary Temper and Harmony. If this deſcription (to what

what ever purpose 'tis design'd) be not prodigiously silly and ridiculous, pray tell me what is. And yet this senseless insignificant Jargon is made the sole and intimate Principle of all *Natural Events*. All Motions, Generations, Corruptions, Alterations, Sympathies, Antipathies, the properties of Bodies, the figure of the Heavens, the systeme of the Stars, the motions of the Planets, Eclipses, Comets, Meteors, The roundness of the Earth, the Flux and Reflux of the Sea, the Original of Rivers and Fountains, the Generation of Winds, Thunder, Lightning, Clouds, Rain, Haile, Snow, Ice, Dew, Petrification, the wonders of the Magnet, the Generation and Transmutation of Metals, the Powers and Specifick Vertues of Plants, the Variety of Animals, their Origine, their Shapes, their Nutrition, their Faculties, The Qualities of the Elements, Heat, Cold, Gravity, Levity, Fluidity, Firmness, Rarity, Density, Perspicuity, Opacity, Hebetude, Subtilty, Smoothness, Asperity, Hardness, Softness, Stubbornness, Flexibility, Light, Colours, Sounds, Tasts, Smells, and all other Phænomena of Nature are only so many Tricks of this Magical kind of Soul. If I could have satisfied my self it had been to any purpose, I should have given you an account of his enormous absurdities in all the forementioned particulars, as they are discoursed of in his *Timæus*, which

contains the whole Body of his Natural Philosophy. But I shall beg your leave to dismiss this Theme, partly because none have more professedly disclaimed the *Platonick Physiologie*, then they that stickle most for his other Whimsies, partly because the *Aristotelian* Philosophy having been of late so shamefully baffled, this which agrees so much with it in its main Principles, and more in its Genius, must of necessity perish together with it, and so will as little need as deserve any particular confutation; partly because their *Physiologie* is well nigh purely *Theological*; The *Platonists* alwayes Treating of τὰ φυσικὰ ὑ φυσικῶς μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ θεολογικῶς, as *Proclus* observes; so that in ventilating and sifting their *Theologie*, I must also of necessity discuss their Natural Philosophie, which is every where so intimately mingled with it; but chiefly because I am lately grown such a despairing *Sceptick* in all *Physiological Theories*, that I cannot concern my self in the Truth or Falshood of any *Hypotheses*. For though I prefer the Mechanical Hypotheses before any other, yet me thinks their contexture is too slight and brittle to have any stress laid upon them; and I can resemble them to nothing better then your *Glass drops*, from which, if the least portion be broken, the whole *Compages* immediately dissolves and shatters into Dust and Atoms; for their parts, which rather lie then hang together, being supported only by

by the thin filme of a brittle Conjecture (not anneal'd by experience and observation) if that fail any where, the whole Systeme of the Hypothesis unavoidably shatters: And how easie a thing it is to spoil the prettiest conjecture, is obvious to the most vulgar observer. The cheif reason therefore, why I prefer the Mechanical and Experimental Philosophie before the *Aristotelean*, is not so much because of its so much greater certainty, but because it puts inquisitive men into a method to attain it, whereas the other serves only to obstruct their industry by amusing them with empty and insignificant Notions. And therefore we may rationally expect a greater Improvement of Natural Philosophie from the *Royal Society*, (if they pursue their design) then it has had in all former ages; for they having discarded all particular *Hypotheses*, and wholly addicted themselves to exact Experiments and Observations, they may not only furnish the World with a compleat *History of Nature*, (which is the most useful part of *Physiologie*) but also laye firm and solid foundations to erect *Hypotheses* upon, (though perhaps that must be the work of future Ages:) at least we shall see whether it be possible to frame any certain *Hypotheses* or no, which is the thing I most doubt of, because, though the *Experiments* be exact and certain, yet their Application to any *Hypotheses* is doubtful and uncertain; so that though

though the *Hypotheſis* may have a firm *Baſis* to bottome upon, yet it can be faſtned and cemented to it no other way, but by conjecture and uncertaine (though probable) applications, and therefore I doubt not but we muſt at laſt reſt ſatisfied with true and exact Hiſtories of Nature for uſe and practice; and with the handſomeſt and moſt probable *Hypotheſes* for delight and Ornament.

And now I paſs over to the main deſign of theſe Papers, which is to give an account of the *Platonick Theologie*: The *Civil Part* whereof, *viz.* That which concerns their *Publick Worſhip*, I ſhall omit. For all the Religious Obſervations of their Country being trifling, obſcene, or inhumane, their temporiſing Conformity to them, ſtands upon Record as one of their greateſt Blemiſhes: Though it muſt be confeſſed that the *Platoniſts* were of all men the greateſt Refiners and Improvers of *Heleniſme*; inſtead of rude and barbarous Uſages, introducing civil and more modeſt Ceremonies. And yet the latter *Platoniſts*, or *ſecond School of Plato*, degenerated into the baſeſt and fouleſt Superſtition, being the greateſt Patrons of *Theurgical Rites* and *Magical Arts*, or rather *Jugling Tricks*, (for whatever they were, they could be no better) eſpecially thoſe of them that did moſt *Pythagoriſe*, As *Apollonius Tyanæus*, that grand ſtickler for *Ethniciſme*; *Jamblicus*, one of their Famouſeſt *Devoto's*; *Julianus* the *Syrian*,

Syrian, Sirnamed *Theurgus*, from his Eminent knowledge and agility in *Magical Tricks*, were great Zealots for the *Pythagorean Philosophie*. But if you look into *Eunapius*, you will see, that not only these, but the *Emperour Julian*, *Porphyrie*, *Maximus*, *Libanius*, *Amelius*, *Sopater*, *Ædesius*, *Chrysanthius*, and others were Zealous Asserters of this Magical kind of Jugling, chiefly (as 'tis supposed) to confront the Christian Religion, and the Miracles on which it stood. But I forbear to prosecute this Theme, my intention being not to discourse of their publick and political actions, but only of their private sentiments.

Their Theologie then consisted of two parts; *Practical*, or that which concerns Theological Vertues; and *Speculative*, or that which concerns speculations about Theological matters. Which two parts integrate a Body of Divinity not unlike to that of King *Ptolomies* man in *Lucian*, who was one half perfectly black, and the other exceeding white; so that part of their Theologie, which relates to practice, is eminently clear and perspicuous, whilst that which is employed in Theorie and Contemplation is monstrously dark and obscure. This latter I shall endeavour to evince more largely in the sequel of my discourse; but for a brief evidence of the first, take this short Catalogue of their Sentiments concerning Religion, which are such as these.

Its

Its main design is to perfect and dignifie humane Nature, 'tis consonant to our Natural Reasons, complies with our Natural Necessities, relieves our Natural Wants. It consists in living up to our Faculties, and acting as becomes Rational Beings; In clearing the Soul from prejudices and prepossessions, and pursuing Truth with an honest and impartial Simplicity: In following the Conduct of Reason, and being confident in its Guidance, seeing the Condition of him that does so is as secure, as 'tis certain that *Infinite Goodness* cannot be angry with him, that has endeavour'd with all faithfulness and diligence to know and do his Duty. It resides in the Mind and Spirit, not in Customes and bare Ceremonies. It is Free and Ingenuous, not Slavish and Troublesome, because it flows from a true Love of God and Goodness. It is truly Noble and Generous, and requires of us to act suitable to the Dignity of rational Beings, to keep up the Splendour and Grandeur of our Natures, and to scorn any Action that's unhandsome, or unworthy our Station and Quality: It commands us onely to live like Men, and forbids us nothing but what makes us Brutes or Devils. It teaches us to imitate and resemble the Divine Perfections, to be God-like in Wisdom, and Justice, and Goodness, in Meekness, and Pity, and Clemency, in Kindness and Patience, in forgiving Injuries,

Injuries, and Pardoning Enemies, in doing hurt to no Man, and doing good to every Man. It interdicts us not any Innocent Delights, but onely restrains the Extravagancies of our Passions and Appetites. It is the most conducive Instrument in the world to the pleasures of both Mind and Body; Infelicities (though Providence were banish't the World) being the *Spontaneous Issues* of Vile Practices; and Sin the *Natural Womb* of Punishment; it therefore permits (unless in some special contingencies) all Corporeal Pleasures, as far as they are healthful and pleasant, and debars us of no delights, but those that are destructive of the *Tranquillity* of our Minds, or *Indolency* of our Bodies. It produces a sweet and gracious temper of Mind, that causes an universal benevolence and kindness to Mankind. It makes us Affable, Humble, Courteous, Charitable, Moderate, Prudent, Unpassionate. It consists of Love, Candour, Ingenuity, Clemency, Patience, Mildness, and all other Instances of Good-Nature. It detests nothing more then a Peevish, Froward, Morose, Uncivil, Passionate, Furious, Talkative, Fanatick Zeal. It begets a true Liberty and Freedome of Spirit. It Exempts us from all effeminate Fears and Scruples, and begets the greatest Serenity and Chearfulness of Mind. It instructs us to dread no Evil from God, but to look upon Him as an infinitely

Gracious and Benigne Being, that deſigns nothing more then the happineſs and perfection of his Creatures; that Tranſacts with Mankind by gentle and paternal Meaſures, and that is ſo far from tying upon us Niceties and Scruples, that he pities our Infirmities, and bids us to concern our ſelves onely about plain and palpable Duties. It is the moſt ſpritely and vivacious thing in the world, driving away all ſad and gloomy Melancholly, begetting in us a firm and rational Confidence, and the ineffable joys of a good Conſcience. It advances the Soul to its Juſt Power and Dominion, and enables it to govern all Corporeal Appetites, and therefore enjoyns us above all things to ſhun Intemperance, not only for its own Intrinſique Baſeneſs, but for its miſcheivous Effects; becauſe it naturally ſo debauches and dulls our Reaſons, as to diſable them for all good and vertuous Actions. For Religion is pure, cleanly and ſpiritual; but an intemperate ſenſuality is naſty, ſottiſh, and makes the mind of man cheap and fooliſh, and unapt for any thing that is Manly, Generous, and Rational, and ſo is the greateſt Impediment to all the ends and Exerciſes of Religion, which directly tends to the enobling of our Natures, the fortifying of our Reaſons, the ſubduing of all our lower and ſottiſh Appetites, the advancing of our manly and intellectual Abilities, in any thing that renders us leſs like Beaſts, and more

more like men. But as for Intemperance, that does by a natural neceſſity beſot and weaken the vigour of our Reaſons, and ſo directly thwart all the ends of Religion, for it either ſtupifies or enrages our Spirits, either ſtuffing our Bodies with dull, watry, and flatulent humours, or putting their Ferments into irregular and extravagant motions. I have often known a rude, wild, diſſolute, cholerick, ungovernable Spirit enter into perſons (otherwiſe of a well-inclin'd Complexion) by no other way then a wide and devouring Throat. To conclude, our work in this World is to ſee that the ὁ ἔσω Ἄνθρωπος maintain its own Authority againſt all the aſſaults of rude and barbarous Paſſions; that it tame and civilize that wild and ſalvage *Beaſt*, to which Providence has tyed it, that by a compleat Victory over all ignoble and unhandſome motions of the brutiſh Faculties, it may be in a manner reſtored to the condition of a pure and intellectual Being; and ſo be capacitated to reliſh the joyes proper to God and Spiritual Natures, for we are not capable of that degree of Felicity which they enjoy, till our Souls are rendred ſo by proportionate degrees of Purity and Holineſs; for the happineſs of Heaven is pure and intellectual, and therefore our minds are purged here from all feculencies of matter, that they may be fitted and qualified to reliſh its Enjoyments; ſo that when the vi-

gorous Energy of the Soul has melted down all the drossy parts of sluggish and unweildy matter, and is become θεοειδὴς, *God-like, and purely spiritual*, then it shall mount up into the Regions of Bliss and Happiness, and shall be admitted into an intimate converse and union with the Divine Nature, and shall live in the Ravishing Contemplations and Embracings of uncreated Beauty, and bathe its dilated Faculties in the full streams of Infinite Goodness, and Sun it self in the Invigorating Beams of Light and Love, and spend a whole Eternity in the blissful Acts of Love, and Joy, and Peace, and every thing that can procure or encrease its happinesse. By all which, you easily discern that Religion is no Arbitrary Exaction, but Wise and Rational, and of natural necessity to perfect and refine our Natures, to raise and purifie our Minds, to prepare and fit us for a higher and more Divine Condition, the Soul being not capable or fit without it to enjoy the pleasures of God and Heaven.

And now I descend to their Speculative or Metaphysical Theologie, which the *Platonists* stile Divine; The *Peripateticks Primitive Philosophie*; and include in it that which they call *Sapience* or *Metaphysicks*; so that I shall not confine my self to matters meerly Theological, but shall take in all the general Principles of Science; especially because I do not intend a pursuit of all particular Disputes,

(for

(for that would be an endleſs undertaking) but only ſome ſuch General Exceptions, as though they may have a more direct aſpect on *Metaphyſical Speculations*, yet may concern their Philoſophie in groſs, and caſt an oblique look upon all its other parts, This premiſed, I proceed

1. The firſt thing therefore, againſt which I except, is their way of reſolving knowledge into its *firſt and fundamental Principles*; in that by rejecting the Teſtimony and Judgment of ſenſe in matters of Philoſophie, they do but involve and perplex the Principles thereof, under the pretext of a more abſtracted and intellectual diſcovery of things: For hereby the minds of men are taken off from the *native Evidence* of plain and palpable Truths, and are fain to ground all their knowledge upon nice and ſubtle Speculations, whereby, at leaſt, clear and unqueſtionable *Truths* are reſolved into *Principles* infinitely more uncertain and diſputable then themſelves. And that the *Platonick* way of reſolving knowledge is juſtly chargable herewith, needs no other proof then barely to repreſent it. They then ſuppoſe that the Truth of all Beings conſiſts in a conformity to their *Archetypal Ideas*, whereby they mean ſome *General Patterns*, by which all the *Individuals* of each *ſpecies* are framed, ſo that to inveſtigate the Nature of things, we muſt endeavour to know the Reſemblance they have

have to their *Originals*; and that therefore to reflect upon these, and to consider their agreement with sensible things, is the onely way to attain a certain knowledge of the Natures of the things themselves. And therefore *Plato* concludes the Omniscience of the *first Mind*, from the supposition that it is furnished with the *Ideas* of all things. And that Mankind might be in a capacity of knowing the Natures of things, he asserts that God has hang'd a multitude of these little *Pictures* of himself and all his Creatures in every mans understanding, that by attending to them, he might direct himself in his Conceptions and Notions of the things themselves; and that herein alone consists the Nature of true Science; and therefore the only difference he assignes between Science and Opinion, is, that the one attends to these unchangable Ideas, but the other to the uncertain and variable Reports of sense. And in another place, discoursing more particularly of this Notion; to the Science of a thing he requires a threefold knowledge, *viz.* of its Name, of its Definition, and of its Picture, which last he asserts to be the cheif cause of knowledge, and instances in a Circle, to the true Science whereof, 'tis necessary that we know by what name to express it, and then its Definition, that 'tis a figure, whose parts are every where equally distant from

In Timæo.

In Epist. ad Dionis Amicos.

from the Centre; and laſtly, that it be repreſented to us by ſome viſible figure; which, ſayes he, gives us a far more ſolid knowledge of the nature of a Circle then the other two; and is that which advances our knowledge from Opinion to Science: Now (continues he) the ſame uſe that theſe delineations have in *Mathematical Theories*, Idea's have in *Phyſical Speculations*, as therefore we beſt underſtand what a Circle is by looking upon its Delineated Figure, ſo the ſureſt knowledge, we can have of the Natures of things, is gotten by contemplating their Ideal Pictures or Images engraven on our underſtandings.

But firſt, methinks this fetching of Principles and *Proleptick Notions* out of the mind of Man, is the ſame thing, as to anatomiſe the eye to ſearch for the firſt Principles and *Poſtulata* of Opticks: For as 'tis the Nature and Office of the Eye to contemplate and obſerve thoſe objects with which 'tis preſented, and thence to frame Optical Rules and Maximes, ſo 'tis of the mind to ſpeculate and conſider thoſe things, which are any way conveyed to its notice, and thence to make general Rules and Obſervations, which after an exact ſcrutiny and compariſon of every individual, are juſtly admitted for Proleptick and fundamental Verities: ſo that *general Axiomes* are only the reſults and abridgments of a multitude of ſingle Experiments; thus from the

the plain experience and obſervation of all man-kind was framed that unqueſtionable Maxime, *That the whole is greater then its parts*, becauſe they ſaw and found it was ſo in all individual Bodies in the world, and the Reaſon why all men aſſent to it at the firſt propoſal, is becauſe they cannot look abroad, but they are preſented with innumerable inſtances thereof, every viſible thing in the world being a *whole* compounded of parts ſenſibly ſmaller then it ſelf. Now to what purpoſe ſhould Providence imprint ſuch obvious and apparent Notices as this upon the minds of Men, when as but to open our eyes, is enough to diſcover their undoubted Truth and Evidence? A man that has animadverſive Faculties, has as little need to be minded of ſuch obvious and apparent Certainties, as a man that has his Eyes in his head, has to be taught that there is a Sun in the Heavens. But ſuppoſe that we were born with theſe congenite Anticipations, and that they take Root in our very Faculties, yet how can I be certain of their Truth and Veracity? For 'tis not impoſſible but the ſeeds of Error might have been the natural Reſults of my Faculties, as Weeds are the firſt and natural Iſſues of the beſt Soyles, how then ſhall we be ſure that theſe ſpontaneous Notions are not falſe and ſpurious? Now the only way to be fully ſatisfied of their Truth and Sincerity, is to examine them by a wary and diſcreet Experience, the

the Teſt whereof will remove all ground to doubt for the future of their Integrity. And if ſo, to what purpoſe do *Connate Principles* ſerve; for before I have made Tryal, I cannot uſe them, becauſe I have no Reaſon to truſt them, till I can be certain of their Veracity; which I cannot be, but by Experience, which yet makes them uſeleſs; becauſe Experimental knowledge is of all others the ſafeſt and moſt unqueſtionable, and therefore muſt needs render all leſſer evidence vain and unneceſſary. At leaſt when our knowledge proceeds in an Empirical way 'tis ſolid and palpable, and made ſo undoubtedly certain from the plain and moſt undoubted Teſtimony of Senſe and Experience, as undeniably to convince *Scepticiſm* of a pitiful and ridiculous Obſtinacy. But when we begin our knowledge from Notions within our ſelves, beſides that 'tis a difficult and nice diſpute to prove that the mind of man is furniſhed with any ſuch innate *Prolepſes*, and that we are deſtitute of any ſure κριτήριον to diſcern Natural Anticipations from Preconceptions of Cuſtome and Education (unleſs we bring them to the Touchſtone of Experience) 'tis doubtleſs that Generalites are not capable of ſo palpable and convictive an Evidence, as ſingle and particular Obſervations. And therefore my *Lord Bacon* has well noted it as none of the leaſt obſtructions to the advancement of *Advancement of Learning. l. 1. c. 5*

knowledge, that *Men have ſought for Truth in their own little Worlds, and that withdrawing themſelves from the Contemplation of Nature, and the Obſervations of Experience, they have tumbled up and down in their own Speculations and Conceits; And ſo have by continual meditation and agitation of Wit urged, and as it were, invocated their own Spirits to Divine, and give Oracles unto them, whereby they have been deſervedly and pleaſingly deluded.*

But ſecondly, however the caſe may be as to other Innate Notions, the Exiſtence of *Plato*'s *Ideas* is altogether precarious and uncertain, and therefore abſolutely unfit to be made the foundation of all Science, for by them they unanimouſly underſtand real Pictures and Images of things, painted and carved upon the Mind, rather then Habits, Thoughts, or Conceptions, and therefore *Plato* defines them to be εἰκόνες καὶ ὁμοιώματα πραγμάτων, which further appears from the grounds from whence they labour to deduce them; for it is evident, ſay they, that the *Eternal Mind* exerted Intellectual Actions from all Eternity, but becauſe there can be no Intellection without an *Intelligible Object*, it muſt follow, that there muſt be *Exemplars* and *Ideal objects* in the Divine Mind, to terminate the actions thereof. But to ſuppoſe that the underſtanding cannot act, unleſs it be employed about an object really exiſting, is not only precarious, but for any thing appears

appears to the contrary, contrary to every mans Experience, ſeeing we are all able to create *Chimæra*'s at pleaſure. But though this *Poſtulatum* were granted as to created Intellects, yet to tie and limit the Contemplations of the *Divine Mind* to a pre-exiſtent object, is (beſide many other abſurdities) not leſs raſh and unwarrantable then to confine the operations of Omnipotence to the Laws of Matter and Motion: ſeeing then there's no tollerable Evidence to be produced of the Truth and Reality of theſe *Mental Images*, what can more betray the cauſe of Science to the Exceptions of *Scepticks*, then to reſolve its utmoſt Truth and Evidence into ſuch uncertain and imaginary Principles?

2. A ſecond Fault, for which they are juſtly blameable, is their ſerious endeavouring to know and define the Notions of abſtracted Eſſences; for theſe pure and Seraphick Intellectualiſts forſooth deſpiſe all ſenſible knowledge, as too groſs and material for their nice and curious Faculties, and diſdain to purſue any knowledge, but what is pure and Intellectual, that is ſuch as is ſutable to their refin'd, and as it were, ſeparated Underſtandings; and therefore they cheifly employ their Thoughts about abſtracted and purely Metaphyſical Beings; and thence they take upon them exactly to deſcribe the meer *Eſſences* of all ſorts of Beings, whether Material, or Immaterial; whether they belong to

the intellectual, or to the ſenſible World: In order whereto, they reſolve all Beings into their ſimple and unmixt Ingredients, and then attempt to aſſigne their preciſe notions and differences from each other. Thus they Analyſe all Phyſical Bodies into ten Principles or Primitive Ingredients; for firſt, they ſuppoſing that all things, by how much the leſs perfect they are, are ſo much the more compounded, and then placing Bodies in the loweſt ranck of Beings, they infer that ſomething of all Superiour Eſſences muſt concur to their Conſtitution, ſo that all Bodies muſt participate of the nine Superiour Orders of Beings, *viz.* *Form*, *Quality*, *Nature*, *Soul*, *Mind*, *Life*, *Eſſence*, *Unity*, *One*, from the mixture of which, after the four ſeveral wayes of Compoſition, *i. e.* of Profundity, Latitude, Longitude, and Solidity reſults Corporeiety. And ſome are ſo ſtrangely ſubtle and abſtractive, as to make a real and ſubſtantial difference between Matter and Body. Again, to paſs by their ſeveral kinds of immaterial Motion and Harmony, they make five ſorts of Numbers, *Divine*, whoſe Property is Uniformity; *Subſtantial*, whoſe Property is Immobility; *Animarie*, whoſe Property is a Power of Self-moving; *Natural*, whoſe Property is a Capacity to be moved; *Mathematical*, which is the common ſort, and the groſſeſt of all, becauſe (ſay they)

See Patricius's Panarchia, eſpecially the eleventh Book.

they) it may be deciphred by External figures. But if they are able to frame a Conception of any Number, beſides that which is Mathematical, they have more faculties then I, who am born but a Man, and live by the uſe of my Reaſon, and five Senſes.

And yet they confidently enough aſſay to give the world minute deſcriptions of theſe, and ſuch other nice and ſubtle Eſſences. It will be unneceſſary to examine their particular performances, if I can evidently Convict the Attempt it ſelf of Folly and Madneſs, as I preſume to you I eaſily can, Becauſe I know you are already ſufficiently convinced how fruitleſs and inſignificant theſe definitions of Metaphyſical and abſtracted Eſſences are, for they are in truth nothing elſe but notifying that thing by more words of a narrower ſignification, which at other times is ſignified by a ſingle one of a larger Import, as if in Arithmetical Accounts, we ſhould denote one greater ſumme by many little ones. But the expreſſing of a thing by divers words, does not more unfold its Nature, then when 'tis ſigned by one; becauſe the uſe of Words is not to explaine the Natures of Things, but only to ſtand as marks and ſignes in their ſtead, as Arithmetical figures are only notes of Numbers; and therefore Names are as unable to explaine abſtracted Natures, as figures are to ſolve *Arithmetical Problems*. I am not ignorant that it has been an ancient and credi-

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table Opinion of the *Platoniſts*, that Names have in them a natural reſemblance and ſuitableneſs to things, and are peculiarly expreſſive of the ſeveral natures and properties of thoſe things they are uſed to repreſent. But words being meerly ſeveral Modifications of ſound made by the Organs of Speech, can have no likeneſs to any thing but ſounds; and where a word ſignifies any peculiar ſound, it may have a natural reſemblance to it, by giving it a ſound like that which it repreſents, as *Tintinnabulum* and *Clangor*, which words ſtrike the *Organs* of hearing ſomewhat after the ſame manner, as thoſe things do, of which they are expreſſive. But to imagine that any words ſhould carry in them a reſemblance to any things beſides Noiſes, is an abſurd and groundleſs conceit; which will evidently appear by impoſing upon words contrary ſignifications, and applying them to expreſs things quite contrary to what they now ſignifie. For Example, take the Names, by which *Fire* is expreſſed in all Languages, and apply them to *water*; and ſo on the contrary, call *Water* by the names of *Fire*, and you will eaſily perceive they have no more natural Correſpondency to the one then to the other, and that the Names of fire have as much agreement with the Nature and Properties of water, as they have with the thing they now ſignifie, and that they would as well expreſs it, if men would agree to change their Impoſition.

And

And therefore I conclude that the office of Definitions is not to explain the Natures of things, but to fix and circumscribe the significa ion of Words; for they being Notes of things, unless their significations be settled, their meaning must needs be Equivocal and uncertain; that is, unless it be determined of what things such particular Names are signs, no man shall be able to signifie his Thoughts to another, because he will use uncertain signs. And therefore to define Matter, Form, Substance, Accident is not to unfold the Intrinsick nature of those things, of which the names of *Matter*, *Form*, *Substance*, *Accident* are marks and signs, but only to define what things I intend to express and signify by these Names. And unless I have some Idea and knowledge of that thing which I call Form or Accident, Antecedently to my denoting of it by these Names, they will be altogether insignificant, because I know not what thing 'tis which they signifie, and the Names themselves give me no more knowledge of those things, then *Gas* and *Blas* or any other words of no defined signification. All which I hope sufficiently evinces the vanity of Metaphysical definitions in order to the discovering the hidden Eslences of things. But yet further, we are so far from attaining any certain and real knowledg of *Incorporeal Beings* (of an acquaintance with which, these *Visionists* so much boast) that we are not able to know any thing of

Corpo-

Corporeal Subſtances as abſtract from their Accidents. Ther's nothing can more perplex my Faculties, then the ſimple *Idea* of naked matter. And certainly, it was never intended that meer Eſſences ſhould be the Objects of our Faculties. And therefore the truely wiſe and diſcerning Philoſophers do not endeavour after the dry and ſapleſs knowledge of abſtracted Natures, but only ſearch after the Properties, Qualities, Vertues and Operations of Natural Beings; the knowledge whereof may be acquired by Obſervations and Experiments; but there are no certain means or rational Methods (that I could ever yet meet with) to inveſtigate the myſterious Ideas of bare and abſtracted Eſſences. Beſides, all Beings are either Objects of ſence, or not; now to go about to diſcover the nature of the former by metaphyſical definitions, would be ridiculous, ſeeing they are far better underſtood by our ſenſes. If any one ſhould ask me, what a Bed-ſtaff or a Joint-ſtool is, the only way to acquaint him what they are, is not to amuſe him with fine artificial definitions, but to ſhew him the things themſelves: And beſides to abſtract ſenſible things from materiality, is to abſtract them from themſelves, becauſe their very Eſſences are Material. And then of them that take upon them to deſcribe the Natures of Beings that are not obnoxious to ſence, I demand by what ways and methods they came to

that

that knowledge. For tis not enough to prove that this or that is the Idea of any thing, becauſe ſome fanciful men are able to make pretty *Hypotheſes* concerning it, but if any man have attain'd any certain knowledge thereof, he is able to give a rational account of the way and method, by which he proceeded in his Enquiry. But this theſe bold definers neither have, nor can do; but if you will be ſo civil as to take their words, they will requite your Civility by acquainting you with more ſtrange and ſtupendious Myſteries. And here (before I conclude this head) I cannot but proclaim a Quarrel againſt the Metaphyſicks of the *School-Doctors*, who pretend too by their definitions to unfold the moſt hidden and abſtracted Eſſences of Things, But their performance is a pregnant Argument of the vanity of their undertaking. For their Vaſt Volums are filled with well nigh nothing, but empty and inſignificant words, frivolous and confus'd diſtinctions, uſeleſs and imaginary notions, precarious and uncertain ſuppoſitions, ſenceleſs and unintelligible Diſcourſes, and with a deal of ſuch phantaſtick and uncouth ſtuff, as makes Fools ſtare, and Wiſe men laugh: But the Intrinſick Eſſence of any one Being is no more explain'd and unſecreted after all their Labour, then it was afore. This, *Sir*, you may underſtand as a recantation of my Errour, or rather bemoaning my unhappineſs, in that I have (contra-

ry to what you once adviſed me) loſt ſo much time and induſtry in theſe abſurd and ſenceleſs Authors. And though this be only to accuſe, yet 'tis as eaſie a task to make good my charge to the utmoſt, as 'tis to make it, but that, becauſe it cannot be done unleſs by an induction of particular inſtances, would require a larger Diſcourſe then can be allowed to a Digreſſion in this Letter.

3. My Third Impeachment, is their affecting a myſterious obſcurity and abſtruſeneſs, thereby to render their notions more ſolemn and venerable. Of this I might produce you infinite Inſtances: But for a full conviction, let me only engage you to ſpend one hour either in *Plato*'s *Parmenides* (which though *Proclus* thinks an entire & exact Syſtem of Platonick Divinity, yet himſelfe waſts ſeveral Chapters in an Enquiry after the ſcope and deſigne of that Dialogue) or any of thoſe of his Theological Commentators, whom they will allow to have underſtood him, (for *Patricius* will not allow that his firſt Gloſſers to the number of above 75 were able to reach his meaning) but cheifly *Proclus his* 6 *Books upon Plato*'s *Theologie*, or for brevity ſake his *Theological Inſtitutions* annexed to them. Of the Obſcurity and Ambiguity of *Plato*'s ſentiments concerning the *Deity*, I have treated you know where, & therefore thither I refer you, only

In Plat. Theol. lib. 1. cap. 7, 8, 9, 10, &c.

In his Plato Exotericus.

ly let me *note*, that when *Cardinal Beſſarion* profeſſes to give us a brief & ſummary account of *Plato*'s notion of God in his *Parmenides*, he amaſſes together (as their manner is) a *Cento* of flat *contradictions*, & gives a Deſcription much like that Peripatetick Riddle of matter, *Ælia Lælia Criſpis, nec Mas, nec Fœmina, nec Androgyna, nec caſta, nec meretrix, nec pudica, ſed omnia*, and then applauds both himſelf and *Plato* for their *Orthodox* ſentiments about the Deity. Juſt ſuch another ſenſeleſs *Jargon* is that ſuppoſititious piece of *Dyonyſius the Areopagite, de Divinis Nominibus*. Again is it not a wild kind of ſpeculative fanaticiſme to explain the unaccountable Ideas of immaterial Beings, by numbers and figures, of which I have already given you a ſufficient Inſtance? But if I ſhould tranſcribe their pretty dreams and conceits of the *ſupereſſential Unity*, of the *Divine Orders* and *Oeconomys*, of the νοῆς ἱδρυτὸν καὶ ἵδρυμα, of the *Paternum Profundum*, *Jynges*, *Teletarchæ*, *Fontani Patres*, of the *Field of Truth*, the *Super-celeſtial Regions* & *Inviſible Heavens*, together with the deſcriptions of their ſeveral Inhabitants, & of all other *Intellectual Hypoſtaſes*, I am confident it would *tempt* your *gravity* (though you were Stoically moroſe) much beyond the eſſay of a ſmile, unleſs perhaps your peruſal of *Jacob Behem* may have prevented their novelty.

Adv Calum. l. 2. c. 3. the paſſage is ſomewhat too tedious to tranſcribe.

But the Græcian Theology (as *Proclus*

Plat. Theol. l. 1. c. 5. contends being founded by *Orpheus*, advanced by *Pythagoras*, and compleated by *Plato*; as *Orpheus* represented his mysteries by Tales and Fables, *Pythagoras* by Numbers and Symbols, so *Plato* and his Followers have (in imitation of them) communicated their Notions by Emblems, Fables, Symbols, Parables, heaps of Metaphors, Allegories, and all sorts of Mystical Representations (as is vulgarly known.) All which upon the account of their Obscurity and Ambiguity are apparently the unfitteſt signes in the world to express the Train of any mans thoughts to another: For beside that they carry in them no Intelligible Affinity to the Notices, which they were design'd to intimate, the Powers of Imagination are so great, and the Instances in which one thing may resemble another are so many, that there is scarce any thing in nature, in which the Fancie cannot find or make a Varietie of such Symbolising Resemblances; so that Emblems, Fables, Symbols, Allegories, though they are prettie *Poetick Fancies*, are infinitely unfit to express Philosophical Notions and discoveries of the Natures of things: and besides, seeing they have left us no key to these dark *Cyphers*, there can be no sure and constant way to unriddle what conceptions are lock'd up under them; so that it does not only require a great deal

See Proclus in Platon. Theol. lib. 1. c. 4.

of

of pains to frame conjectures of their mea ing, but the ſureſt we can pitch upon are withal ſo uncertain and ambiguous, that they unavoidably leave us fluctuating in meer uncertainties. And what wiſe man will take ſo much pains for ſuch a knowledge that can at higheſt amount but to a doubtful gueſs? The truth of it is, they have by theſe Exorbitances been highly injurious to the advancement of true and ſolid Philoſophie; for it needs little leſs pains to diſcover their meaning, then perhaps it would to have examined the thing it ſelf, and yet when that is done, we are as far from our end as before. The end of Philoſophie is to ſearch into and diſcover the Nature of things, but I believe you underſtand not how the Nature of any thing is at all diſcovered, by making it the Theme of Allegorical and dark diſcourſes.

But I muſt not too much aggravate this Accuſation upon the *Platoniſts* in particular, ſeeing it has been the Catholick Crime of all the Learned World. The *Monk of Viterbo* in his Counterfeit *Beroſus* derives this Art of wraping up and unfolding Myſteries at the ſame time from *Noah*, but perhaps another man would have fetch't its Invention from the *Oracular Devils*, who taking upon them to foretel, what they could not foreknow, were forced to uſe ſuch ſhifts to hide their Ignorance.

Ambage nexa delphico mos eſt Deo
Arcana tegere.

And

And from hence they who affected a Title of Wisdom imitated their Oracles, and becauſe they undertook to explain thoſe ſecrets, which were above the reach of their Inquiſition, that they might not diſcover their ignorance inſtead of their knowledge, they wrapt up their Myſteries in dark and ænigmatical Repreſentations, as being too Sacred and Venerable (as they pretended) to be proſtituted to vulgar and unhallowed Minds. *Clemens Alexandrinus* roundly charges almoſt every Sect of the Philoſophers herewith. *Only *Epicurus* took the word σαφήνεια *Perſpicuity* for his Motto, whereas the reſt generally diſclaimed it. The ſtory is common, that *Hipparchus* was baniſhed *Pythagoras* his School, and a κενοτάφιον ſet in his place, as of a Perſon loſt, and all becauſe he went about to unriddle the *Pythagorick Arcana*: neither is *Heraclitus* his Sirname σκοτεινὸς becauſe of the obſcurity of his Writings leſs famous, *Clarus ob obſcuram linguam magis inter inanes*, as *Lucretius* quibbles upon him, & *Laertius* relates of him in his life, That he Wrote a Book ſo monſtrouſly obſcure, that at length it became a Controverſie, whether it treated of a *Common-wealth*, or of *Nature*. And no leſs common is *Ariſtotles* Epiſtle to *Alexander*, wherein he profeſſes that though he had made his Books publick, yet he had not publiſhed them, and therefore he

Stromat. l. 5.

* *Laert. in his Life.*

ἐκδεδομένα καὶ μὴ ἐκδεδομένα. *Plut. in Alex.*

he divides his Writings into *Exotericks*, that were Intelligible to Vulgar Readers, and *Eiſotericks*, that were Intelligible to none but Sons of Art; whence *Atticus* in *Euſebius* compares him to the Cuttle-Fiſh, becauſe he like that ſort of Fiſh, hides himſelf with his own Inke. And how well the School-Doctors (his great Admirers) have imitated him, I need not tell you, onely I have more then once with pleaſure obſerv'd it of *Ægidius*, that where he cannot make his Maſter *Aquinas* ſpeak good ſenſe, (though the Non-ſenſe be palpable) he attributes a Myſteriouſneſs to his extraordinary and more then humane ſubtletie. Shall I add the proud Race of *Spagyriſts*, who (like *Æneas*) go cloathed in clouds, and what they diſcover by their fire, darken by their ſmoak? I might add many modern Writers, but I forbear, only methinks all the World ſeem to have gone to School to that Pedagogue in Quintilian, *Qui diſcipulos obſcurare quæ dicerent, juberet, græco verbo utens* σκοτεινον. All Writers are ambitious to have Commentators, and certainly 'tis not a little eſtimation that obſcurity gains from the Vulgar, whence that commendation in *Quintilian*, *Tanto melior, ne ego quidem Intellexi*; and that concluſion in *Lucretius*, Inſtitut. l. 8 c. 2.

Omnia enim ſtolidi magis admirantur amantque,
Inverſis quæ ſub verbis Latitantia cernunt.

But

But all that they understand, they despise, τὸ δὲ ῥᾷστον καταγελάσεται ὁ δῆμος, saies *Synesius* in his Encomium of *Calvisius*. Now since I have ventured to play the *Aristarchus* in reference to so many eminent *Vertuosi*, methinks I may dare to add the same Censure of our late English *Rosie-Crusians*, but yet of all men I am most sorely afraid of angring these, because they seem to be of a very quarrelsome Humour, and to have a huge ambition to be esteemed the Polemical Scripturients of the Age; whereas I have been scared from Engaging with a *Rosie-Crucian*, ever since I first saw the Controversial Rencountres of *Eugenius Philalethes*; and besides, (to confess my fears to you) I know not but the Romantick Heroes of this Order may have retreiv'd the lost Invention of Enchanted Arms, especially that lovely Fairie Knight descended (as the Romance of his Life relates it, 'tis a prettier Tale then that of *Amadis de Gaul*) of the *Cesar Heydons of Rome*, and the venerable Author of the *Heydonian Philosophy*, as himself modestly stiles his own ignorant, uncouth, and ridiculous Scribble.

But 'tis more fitting that these *Pedantick Cheats* were chastised by the Publique Rods, in that they directly Poison mens minds, and dispose them to the wildest and most *Enthusiastick Fanaticisme*; for there is so much Affinity between *Rosi-Crucianisme* and *Enthusiasme*, that whoever entertains the one, he

he may upon the ſame Reaſon embrace the other; And what Peſtilential Influences the Genius of *Enthuſiaſme* or opinionative Zeal has upon the Publick Peace, is ſo evident from Experience, that it needs not be prov'd from Reaſon. To conclude, I am confident, that from the beginning of time to this day, there has not been ſo great a Conjunction of Ignorance with Confidence, as in theſe Fellows, which certainly of all other Aſpects is the moſt contrary and malignant to true knowledge.

4. My next Accuſation is, that inſtead of pure and genuine Reaſon, they abound ſo much with gaudy and extravagant Phancies. I that am too ſimple or too ſerious to be cajol'd with the frenzies of a bold and ungovern'd Imagination cannot be perſwaded to think the Quainteſt plays and ſportings of wit to be any true and real knowledge. I can eaſily allow their Diſcourſes the Title of *Philoſophical Romances*, (a ſort of more ingenious impertinencies) and 'tis with this eſtimate I would have them read: But when they pretend to be Natures Secretaries, & to underſtand all her Intrigues, or to be Heavens Privadoes, talking of the Tranſactions there, like men lately drop'd thence encircled with *Glories*, and cloathed with the Garments of *Moſes* & *Elias*, and yet put us off with nothing but rampant Metaphors, and Pompous Allegories, and other ſplendid but empty Schemes of ſpeech, I muſt crave leave to

account them (to say no worse) Poets & Romancers. true Philosophie is too sober to descend to these wildnesses of Imagination, and too Rational to be cheated by them. She scorns, when shee is in chase of Truth, to quarry upon trifling gaudy Phantasms: Her Game is things not words. I shall not presume to censure *Plato's* Stile for its being too Pompous & Poetick, though this has been done already by *Aristotle, Dionysius Halicarnasseus, Vossius*, and other Professors of the *Critical Art*. Only I remember I had not long conversed with Platonick Authors, when I took occasion to set it down as a note to my self, that though a huge lushious stile may relish sweet to childish and liquorish Fancies, yet it rather loaths and nauceats a discreet understanding, then informs and nourishes it. That *Platonisme* is almost nothing but an Allegorie, is too notorious to want a proof, *Plato's* two famous Dialogues, *viz.* his *Symposium* and his *Phædrus*, ranked by *Ficinus* among his Metaphysical and Theological Treatises, treat of nothing but Love and Beauty, and of them too in Poetick Schemes and Fables. 'Tis pretty to read their Metaphysical Discourses of Truth, which are nothing else but *Love-stories*. The soul being enamour'd with the transcendent Beauty and Lovelinesse of Truth is enflamed with impatient desires of enjoying her embraces, and therefore Wooes and Courts her with indefatigable Patience, for she must

must be supposed (as all other Beauties are) excessively coy and difficult, but by diligence and importunitie the understanding wins and enjoys her; And then they express their embraces in the same language, they would speak of the private transactions between Man and Wife. Thus (you see) they have the main Propertie of *Romanceers* to talk much of Love. And indeed *Plato* himself seems to have been the first Author of *Amorous Romances*, for towards the beginning of his *Convivium* he chides the Poets, that lived before him, for their Omissions in reference to Love, and that when they had made Panegyricks of all the other Gods. None of them had ever attempted an Elogie upon This.

Now to Discourse of the Natures of Things in Metaphors and Allegories is nothing else but to sport and trifle with empty words, because these Schems do not express the Natures of Things, but only their Similitudes and Resemblances, for Metaphors are only words, which properly signifying one thing, are apply'd to signifie another by reason of some Resemblance between them. When therefore any thing is express'd by a Metaphor or Allegory, the thing it self is not expressed, but only some similitude observ'd or made by Fancy. So that Metaphors being only the sportings of Fancy comparing things with things, and not marks or signes of Things. All those Theories in Philosophie

which are expreſſed only in metaphorical Termes, are not real Truths, but the meer Products of Imagination, dreſs'd up (like Childrens *babies*) in a few ſpangled empty words, ſuch as the Greeks call κενοφωνίαι empty Phraſeologies that have not Notion & Thing enough to fill them out. Thus their wanton & luxuriant fancies climbing up into the Bed of Reaſon, do not only defile it by unchaſt and illegitimate Embraces, but inſtead of real conceptions and notices of Things, impregnate the mind with nothing but Ayerie and Subventaneous Phantaſmes.

But 'tis ſtill more fantaſtick and abſurd to talke metaphorically concerning thoſe things, of whoſe Ideas we are utterly ignorant, & of which we are not able to diſcourſe in Proper Terms, for ſuch Diſcourſe muſt needs be Non-ſence, and the matter of it muſt needs be nothing; becauſe they treat of they know not what. For Metaphors not ſignifying things, and things being always ſignified by proper Termes, what can be more evident then that meer Metaphors without proper Terms are employed about nothing at all, or only an Imaginary ſomething. And they that talk thus, do but firſt imagine a Subject, and then imagine in it ſome Reſemblances to ſomething elſe, that is in effect, they make a bauble, and then play with it. Of this Nature, (to give you one Inſtance) are the greateſt part

part of their diſcourſes concerning the Soul, in diſcourſing of which, they draw Metaphors from all the Senſes, Members, and Functions of the Body, from all the General Hypotheſes of Nature; from all the Phænomena of the Heavens and the Earth, from all the ſeveral Properties and Operations of the ſeveral ſpecies of Creatures, and apply them to the Nature, Faculties, and operations of the Soul; But becauſe they are altogether ignorant of the nature and ſubſtance of the Soul, and are not able to expreſs the greateſt part of theſe things by proper terms; all theſe Metaphors muſt paſs for idle and inſignificant Non-ſenſe, becauſe they ſignifie we know not what, and deſcribe we know not how; ſo that methinks the *Platonick Philoſophie* is juſt ſuch another thing as the *Epicureans* fancy the world to be, a Maſs of pretty words handſomely and luckily pack't together; I muſt confeſs that before I had examined it, by reaſon of its huge Tumid words, I look't upon it at a diſtance, as the loftieſt and ſublimeſt knowledge in the world, but when I came to ſurvey it more cloſely, I ſoon found that it was nothing elſe but words, ſo that I may more handſomely compare it to a Landskip, in which at a diſtance appear huge Rocks, and vaſt Mountaines, that ſeem to vie height with, and out-reach the Clouds, and yet by a nearer approach theſe vaſt bulky Appearances are found to be nothing but a few Artificial Shadows.

5. Ano-

5. Another miſcarriage is, that they employ much of their Contemplations in things altogether uncertain and unſearchable. They delight exceſſively to wander into remote and inviſible Notions, and to talk confidently (as Travellers into forreign Regions are wont to do) of doubtful and unaccountable Problems, and any thing which is as far diſtant from Humane diſcovery, as concernment. Which ſcopeleſs deſire of ſearching into things exempt from humane Inquiſition, is that which renders Curioſity Criminal; For Curioſity it ſelf is a gallant and heroical Quality, and the natural Product of a Generous Complexion, but when it aſpires after the knowledge of things placed above its Reach, it degenerates into a vain and fruitleſs Ambition, or rather an unnatural luſt of the mind after ſtrange and extravagant Notions. Though the Truth of it is, The minds (or rather fancies) of men have ſuch a natural liquoriſhneſs after the knowledge of things ſtrange and remote, that they ſwallow nothing with ſo grateful a Guſto, as ſtories of things rare and unuſual; neither care they how uncertain and phantaſtick they be, ſo they be but odd and prodigious; and hence it comes to paſs, that men are generally more tickled and enchanted with *Legends* and *Romances*, then with uſeful and remarkable *Memories*. Which (they ſay) is the Reaſon why the Ancients made ſo much uſe of Fables and Apologues to inſtruct

ſtruct the People, becauſe they carried in them ſomething monſtrous, and exceeding the limits of Probability. The ſenſeleſs multitude, that could not relliſh the wiſe Diſcourſes of *Socrates*, would be much taken and ſurpriſed with a pretty and extravagant Tale of a Lyon, an Ape, or a Fox, *&c.* But not to aggravate this Childiſhneſs of theſe dull and muddy Souls. 'Tis an unpardonable Luxury and Wantonneſs for Wiſe and conſidering Philoſophers, to ſpend their time and ſtudy to diſcloſe diſtant and inſcrutable Myſteries, and frontleſly to dictate to the world in ſuch Theories, as are infinitely remote from humane knowledge and diſcovery, and which 'tis as impoſſible to know, as it would be if they had never been. And that the *Platoniſts* are of all men moſt chargeable with this folly, theſe few enſuing inſtances may demonſtrate. As when they confidently take upon them to give the world exact and minute deſcriptions of Incorporeal Beings; To give an account of the Nature and Oeconomy of the God-head, and how the ſeveral Ranks of Ideas are ſuſpended upon the three ἰνδιαι ὑποστασεις *Uniform Hypoſtaſes*, to pry into the moſt hidden Receſſes of the Divine Mind, and diſtinctly to delineate how the Ideas of all Created Perfections are there diſplayed. To diſcourſe about the Subſtance, Nature, Properties, Offices, Actions, Orders, and Polities of Angels: To aſſert that the Heavenly Hoſt

Hoſt is divided into three Hierarchies, and that each Hierarchie is ſubdivided into three Orders, and every Order into as many Legions, as there are contain'd Individuals in every Legion, *i. e.* 6666; and that this Ternary of Hierarchies, and Nonary of Orders do Circulate about the three-fold Eſſence of God, (as the Planets about the Sun) with infinite other the like Dreams about their peculiar Natures, Offices, Diſtances, and Employments: And withall to pretend to demonſtrative Evidence in theſe things. Again, when they confidently aſſert the *Firſt Mind* to be the onely Author of Souls; and that humane Souls were temper'd in the ſame *Veſſel*, where the Soul of the Univerſe had been wrought; and that they were made out of ſome remaining fragments of that mixture out of which the Gods of the ſecond and third *Claſſis* had been framed; That the *Firſt Mind* had deputed the *Genii* or *Junior Deities* Guardians of his *Of-ſpring*; and that it is they, that Marry them to their Reſpective *Vehicles*. When they define whether the *Apoſtate Genii* be purely immaterial; and whether they be vitally united with matter; and whether they were made peccable only by union with their *Vehicles*; whether any of the *Aerial Spirits* be *Atheiſts* or no, whether any of them be of a ſportive, droling humour, and delight to effect Antick Prodigies in the Aire, to abuſe and affright

See Proclus in Plat. Theolog. l. 4. c. 19.

affright ſilly Mortals; How they change Intelligence, and diſcourſe together. When they delineate the Coſmographie of the *Archetypal World*, repleniſhed with the Immaterial Ideas of all material Beings; and deſcribe the *Syſteme* of the Inviſible Heavens. When they frame particular *Hypotheſes*, not onely of the nature of the Soul, but of the manner of its living, before its lapſe into this life, and after its return home again. Laſtly, when they Graphically deſcribe the manner of the worlds laſt and final Conflagration: I might add too their *Hypotheſes* about the manner of the worlds Production; for unleſs they had been Spectators, it was not poſſible for them to know in what way and method the Univerſe was Erected; that depending wholly on the free Election of the Divine Will: Though ſome Learned Men have thought it a mighty Confirmation of the Truth of the Moſaick Writings, if they could but evince a conſonancy of any of the *Philoſphers Hypotheſes* with the Moſaick Account of the Origine of the Univerſe; as if their naked ſurmiſes could give any Teſtimony to Truth: For either they received the Account they give, from a credible Tradition, and if ſo, then *Moſes* was the firſt Author thereof, for none elſe could give any certain Account of the Proceſs, Providence was pleaſed to uſe in the Production of things, but certainly tis no Argument of the Truth of the Moſaick

Account, becauſe the *Jews* told it to the *Egyptians*, and they to the *Grecians*, for this can adde no Authority or Evidence to it: Or elſe they were of their own framing, and conſequently were altogether groundleſs and unwarrantable Conjectures; for it was ſurely impoſſible any mans Reaſon ſhould tell him the particular Circumſtances of the worlds Creation; as that its material Principle was a *Tohu* and a *Bohu*, that it was agitated by the Divine Spirit, that ſeveral Portions were form'd at ſeveral times, that all was finiſhed in ſix days ſpace, rather then five or ſeven, and the like: this deſigne therefore of diſcovering a Conſonancy between the Hypotheſes of any of the Philoſophers concerning the Origine of the Univerſe, and the Moſaick Account thereof, is abſolutely ſcopeleſs and unprofitable. But this is a digreſſion that has thruſt its ſelf in here before I was aware of it. To reſume therefore my former Theme, is it not the higheſt and moſt diſingenuous madneſs for men to give ſuch confident and definitive ſentences in matters ſo remote and unaccountable? All the forementioned particulars (to which it were eaſie to add a thouſand more) are apparently beyond the reach of humane Cogniſance, and ſuch things as cannot be known but by Revelation, there being no other means to attain to any knowledge of things of their vaſt diſtance and remoteneſs. And if we will

will but reflect upon our own Thoughts, we must confess that we cannot perceive the Ideas of Beings that are not placed within the Horizon of Sense, and those that pretend to a discovery of them, had better pretend to Oracles, Propheſies, Illapses, and Divinations, then to the sober and steady Maximes of Philosophie. And therefore 'tis not unusual with the *Platonists* to pretend to a kind of Enthusiasme. They stile themselves ἱερόφαντας, the inspired Priests of Truth; and their Philosophie ἔνθεον φιλοσοφίαν as if it had been poured into them in a Divine and Extatical Fury, and *Proclus* says it a thousand times of *Plato* and his Commentators, that they did ἐκβακχεύεσθαι, as if they had written with a kind of *Bacchical Enthusiasme*; And they every where talk so like Prophets and Oracles, as if they were inspired at least by a *Bath-Col*: And 'tis hugely pleasant to read their own Exorbitant Parades of the Exalted, Divine, and Extatick sublimity of Platonick Contemplation; they boast so often of sequestring themselves from all Corporeal Commerce, and soaring up into the Ethereal Regions, that a man would expect News from the third Heaven every day. If they were in good earnest, we might expect strange discoveries indeed, but alas, these Sons of Imagination are as little troubled with *Real Extasies*, as other men, onely they are pleased to express the Frenzies of their fiery and

ſubtle Fancies by theſe Alluſions. So that let them talk never ſo Seraphically of retiring from the trivial and common Entertainments of ſenſe, they do but ſit down in the Theatre of Fancy, and entertain themſelves with the *Idola Specus*, or Images of their own Complexion, and though they take them for great Realities, (as other Sleepers do their Dreams) yet when they awake out of their fanciful Viſions, and return to a ſtrength and conſiſtency of Reaſon, they then diſcern them to have been only evanid Appearances repreſented (as all Dreams are) upon the Scene of Imagination.

Now 'tis a great miſtake of ſome men to think it neceſſary that we ſhould be able to confute ſuch vain and ungrounded Poſitions; and that for this Reaſon, becauſe they are out of the Sphear of humane knowledge; for though they may ſometimes perchance, like the *Carteſian Vortices*, juſtle with ſome certain Truths belonging to our Sphear by reaſon of their Vicinity, yet that happens by chance, and is not neceſſary: But being in their own Natures out of our View, 'tis not to be expected we ſhould give any account of them, becauſe that would be to aſſert what we cannot know, which is to commit the very fault we are now chaſtiſing; 'tis therefore ſufficient to ſhew the abſurdity of an aſſertion, if I can evince it to be unevident, though I can not to be untrue, for it is not leſs unbecoming a

Wiſe

Wiſe man to aſſent to an uncertainty than to an untruth: becauſe 'tis not the real certainty of a Truth, that is a ſufficient motive of our aſſent, but its evidence to us; for all Truths are in themſelves equally certain (though not equally neceſſary and durable) but 'tis from the variety of evidence that the difference of our knowledge proceeds; and howſoever aſſertions may be in themſelves real and certain Truths, yet unleſs they are evident as well as certain, they will be to us vain and fictitious Phantaſms. And therefore I cannot but commend this one *Paradox* of the *Stoicks*, That a Wiſe man is always free from Opinion, Ignorance, and Error: From Opinion, becauſe he will not aſſent to uncertainties: from Ignorance, becauſe what he knows not, he knows that he knows it not, and ſo has as much knowledge of the thing, as he is capable of: from Error, becauſe he that will neither aſſent to what is uncertain, and knows what is to be known, and what not, can ſcarce be liable to miſtakes. And it was none of the leaſt Inſtances of *Epicurus*'s Wiſdom and Modeſty, that he made it one of his cheifeſt *Phyſiological Canons*, that he had nothing to do with τὰ δυνατὰ καὶ τὰ ἐνδεχόμενα *matters meerly Poſſible, and meerly Contingent*; and therefore he was alwayes wont to ſtate and conclude all Queſtions about the Phænomena of the Heavens, and all other remote and unevident Enquiries, with nothing elſe but *It may be ſo.* Be-

Beſides in ſuch caſes any man may aſſert whatever a warm or giddy Brain may ſuggeſt, and we ſhall have equal inducements to embrace contrary Hypotheſes; thus as *Mahomet* has ſomewhere in his *Alcoran*, deſcribed the Syſteme of the inviſible Heavens, the Orders of Angels, & the ſeveral Folds, in which their ſeveral Choruſes reſide, as well as *Plato*, ſo I have as great Reaſon to induce me to credit the *Mahometan Hypotheſis* as the *Platonick*. And then (to diſpatch) we are not concern'd in ſuch caſes to ſhew the vanity of the Aſſertion (for that we ſuppoſe impoſſible) but that of the Aſſertor, whom we blame for acting ſo much againſt all the Rules of Reaſon, in affirming that, which 'tis evidently impoſſible for him to know; whereby he both troubles the world with debates equally unneceſſary and endleſs, and obſtructs the Advancement of True Knowledge, by diverting thoſe that are in queſt after it, into dark, dubious, and endleſs Traverſes: And certainly among the many things that have been hindrances to the diſcovery of Truth, none ſeem to have been of a more unhappy and diffuſed Influence, then that men have been generally digging for it, where its veins lie too deep, and out of the fathome of humane Induſtrie.

Now if this one Caution againſt dogmatizing in matters remote and unevident were well imbibed, it would not only prove an effectual Antidote

tidote against many thousand pestilent controversies, that infest the world, but also a deadly Bane to the Platonick Philosophie; for if in reading the Platonists, you shall as you proceed, but ask them for a rational evidence of their magisterial dictates (especially in those things which they boast of as their sublimest speculations) and resolve that you will not make them matters of opinion, 'till they shall have given you some rational inducements so to do, I will engage you shall never be one of their Disciples, though you should study them to the revolution of their Great Year.

Before I take my leave of this Consideration, I cannot but note that this Impudent humour of talking confidently of things uncertain and widely remote from humane Cognizance was the peculiar crime of the first and earliest *Hereticks* in the Christian Church. Thus the main of the Heretical Opinions of the *Gnosticks*, and the several sub-dividing Factions of them, *Valentinians*, *Saturnilians*, *Basilidians* and other primitive Hereticks were only some extravagant Hypotheses concerning the Divinity, and its Essential Emanations, and their several *Syzigiæ*, and *Pleromata*, out of which they framed a peculiar Oeconomie of the Godhead, compounding the Divine Nature out of a multitude of Orders and Individuals (you may fancy it such a kind of Monster, as the Picture of Mr *Hobbs*'s *Leviathan*.)

And

And this they did by blending ſome Fancies out of *Plato*, and Fables out of *Heſiods* Theogonia with the Goſpel of Saint *John*, as the Fathers unanimouſly conclude. And as 'tis reported of *Simon Magus*, that he endeavoured to compound a Religious Worſhip out of the Rites of Paganiſme, and the Sacraments of Chriſtianity; ſo 'tis manifeſt that the *Gnoſticks* would have integrated one Syſtem of Divinity by mingling the *Orphean*, *Pythagorean*, and *Platonick* Theologie with the Doctrines of the Goſpel. Of this ſort of men and their Doctrines all the more learned Commentators underſtand the frequent cautions of the Apoſtles againſt Hereſies and Hereticks, and peculiarly that eminent paſſage, *Coloſ.* 2. 8. where the Apoſtle warns them againſt *Philoſophie and vain deceit, after the Tradition of men, after the Rudiments of the world*, i. e. a ψευδώνυμος γνῶσις a falſe knowledge that pretends to know the higheſt myſteries upon the naked Aſſertions of ſome confident men. And of theſe αὐγυγίαι and the ſeveral emanations of the Godhead do they underſtand thoſe fabulous γενεαλογίαι Saint *Paul* mentions 1 *Tim.* 1. 4. ſo that the Hereticks, the Apoſtles ſpeak of, were only giddy and opinionative men, that took upon them to introduce the Opinions of the Philoſophers into the Chriſtian Faith: For which reaſon it was that *Tertullian* ſtiled the Philoſophers *Hereticorum Patriarchas*, becauſe from them were borrowed the greateſt part

part of Heretical Opinions. Thus the Learned *Holſtenius has made a Parallel between the *Pythagorean* and *Manichean* Principles. And *Johannes Baptiſta Criſpus* in his diſcuſſing of *Plato*'s Opinions, has at the end of every Chapter ſhewn what Hereſies ſprung from each Opinion. In this Notion of Hereſie the School-Doctors will prove as Arch-Hereticks as any of the Ancients, for they have in the ſame manner corrupted the ſimplicity and purity of Chriſtian Religion, by blending the Placits of *Ariſtotle* with the Articles of Faith, as *Manes* and *Valentinus* did by mingling with the Chriſtian Faith, the Philoſophy of *Plato* and *Pythagoras*. And then they have filled their vaſt Volumns with ſubtle and nice Hypotheſes made out of this mixture, out of which are of neceſſity generated an infinite number of idle and unprofitable Altercations, or as (as my *Lord Bacon* prettily ſtiles them) *Vermiculate Queſtions*, becauſe they are generated from the putrefaction of true and ſolid knowledge, like worms from putrified ſubſtances: though perhaps they may ere long deſerve that Epithete upon another ſcore. I might have added to them the late grand Dogmatical Maſter of Orthodoxy, whoſe rude Dogmatiſing has occaſioned as many Controverſies in the Chriſtian Church, as ever *Manes* or *Valentinus* did. The reſult of all this is to direct to the true

* *Diſſert. de vita & ſcriptis Porphyr. c.* 1.

Apoſtolical Notion of Hereſie, which is not ſo much an Opinion that is apparently falſe, as one that is groundleſs and unwarrantable, and ſo naturally tends to the creating unneceſſary diſputes, and making Factions and Diviſions, as *Plotinus* ſpeaks of the *Gnoſticks*, that they were *Inventors of new and vain Opinions, to no other end then the erecting of a peculiar Sect.* And though moſt of the Primitive Hereſies were falſe and impious, as well as raſh and ungrounded, yet that which gave them their denomination, was their vanity and tendency to create miſchievous and deſtructive Schiſmes. The way then to prevent Controverſies, and to avoid Schiſms, is not to define, but ſilence groundleſs and dividing Opinions. The Church ſhould in ſuch caſes imitate *Socrates*'s *Dæmon*, that never gave any poſitive Anſwer, but as oft as it was conſulted anſwered either *No*, or *Nothing*; becauſe they are uſually ſtarted about matters uncertain, and conſequently undeterminable. So that when both Parties determine contrary to each other, and upon that ſeparate, they are both equally Schiſmaticks, becauſe they both divide upon inſufficient and unwarrantable grounds. For inſtance (to paſs by that early and unhappy *Quartodecimarian* Schiſm.) In that grand Schiſm of the *Greek Church* from the *Romane*, though the latter was notoriouſly Schiſmatical, yet the former was not altogether guilt-

Ennead 2. *lib.* 9.

guiltleſs: for although they had Reaſons ſufficient to warrant a ſeceſſion from the Romaniſts; as the Popes uſurpation in challenging a Power to impoſe on them new Articles of Faith, and putting of this Tyranny into practiſe, by requiring of all that would be Members of the Romane Communion, to receive his addition of the *Filioque* into their Creeds: Now (I ſay) had they divided only for the maintaining their own Liberty againſt the Papal Encroachments, and for not admitting the addition of *Filioque* as an Article of Faith, their ſeparation had been juſt and noble. But when they ſtood as obſtinately on the other ſide, as the Romaniſts did, and would not admit of an Union, but upon Condition, that it might be received as an Article of Faith, that the Holy Ghoſt proceeded from the *Father only*, they cannot be cleared of a Schiſmatical diviſion. Now if inſtead of being dogmatical in both theſe contrary Extreams, both Parties had agreed to ſilence the Controverſie and decide it neither way, as Truth would not have been leſs ſecur'd, ſo Peace would have been much better preſerved. I conclude therefore in the words of a late Learned and Judicious Divine. *If the Church had ſtopt and damn'd up the Originals and Springs of Controverſies, rather then by the determining for the one part, to give them as it were a Pipe and Conduit to convey*

them to Poſterity, I perſwade my ſelf the Church had not ſuffered that inundation of Opinions, with which at this day it is over-run.

The ſuppoſed Agreement between MOSES *and* PLATO *DISPROVED.*

I Have (*Sir*) preſented you with theſe Reflections rather then any other, not ſo much becauſe I apprehend them more conſiderable (though perhaps they are ſo) as becauſe they firſt occurred to my Thoughts: For it had been no difficult work to have added Infinite more; but theſe Conſiderations being already too prolix, and the ſmall portion of Time allotted for this Task almoſt expired, I ſhall wave thoſe that remain, and only vindicate the Accuſations I have already made, by examining & controuling an Apology, that endeavours to waſh them off.

For it is replyed on *Plato*'s behalf, that he cannot well be charged with Raſhneſs and Futility, but the Accuſation muſt reach *Moſes* alſo, and the reſt of the *Sacred Prophets*; becauſe from them *Plato* borrowed his choiceſt and ſublimeſt Theories, which if in any thing vain and trifling, the firſt Authors ought in reaſon to beare the greateſt Blame, &

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ſo at length my charging *Plato* with Futility, if it be valid, will fall foul upon *Moſes* himſelf. Which farther compleatly excuſes his Raſhneſs, ſeeing he delivered his Theological Theories, not from his own Fancy, but derived them from ſo good and ſure an Authority, as *Moſes* and the *Prophets*. And that he did ſo is the unanimous conſent of all the learned world: Fathers, School-Doctors, and Modern Writers agree not more unanimouſly in any one Principle then this: τὶ ἐςι Πλάτων, ἢ Μωϋσῆς ἀτ]ικίζων is now become as vulgar and trivial as a Proverb. The particular account they give hereof, is this, That *Plato* derived many of theſe Myſteries from *Pythagoras*, who in his Travels into Ægypt and the Eaſt had either immediately received them from the Jewes themſelves, or from the Ægyptian Prieſts, and the Chaldean Wiſe men, who came to know them by Converſe with, and Tradition from the Jewes. And that *Plato* himſelf travelling into Ægypt in queſt after knowledge, received his choiceſt and moſt important notices concerning Divine and Supernatural things from the Jewes, who about that time in great flocks reſorted thither, or from the Egyptian Prieſts, who either derived them from the Moſaick writings, or received them from the Jewes by an Oral Tradition. For (ſay they) God delivered to *Moſes* in Mount Sinai a twofold Law, תורה שבכתב The *Written Law*, and תורה שבעל פה The *Vocal*

Vocal Law, which is the Myſtical and Enigmatical meaning of the Former, but by reaſon of its extraordinary ſacredneſs was not expoſed to the rude People, but only whiſpered and conveyed in the ſlender Pipe of Auricular Tradition from age to age among the great Sanhedrim and the Prophets down to the time of *Eſdras*, by whom (and the great Synagogue, of which many of the latter Prophets were members) it was committed to writing, leaſt by reaſon of their frequent diſperſions and captivities it ſhould by ſome ill fortune periſh: which carryed its ſtream out of the private Channel, in which it run before, and ſoon ſpread it abroad among Forreign Nations, eſpecially in Egypt and Chaldea, where great numbers of Jews reſided. For an eminent Inſtance of all which, they alledge the Doctrine of the Sacred Trinity, which (ſay they) being one of the Rareſt and Choiceſt Myſteries of this *Vocal Cabala*, was greedily embraced by the Egyptians, from whom *Plato* and his Followers received that clear and full knowledge thereof, which appears ſo much every where in their Writings.

To all which I anſwer in theſe enſuing Conſiderations.

1. That it is ſo far from being matter of commendation that it is rather a diſparagement to have been converſant in, and borrowed from the old Eaſtern and Egyptian Learning. That the Ancient

ent Sages of Egypt and the Eaſt were acquainted with the firſt Rudiments of Mathematical Sciences is evident from the moſt authentick Records of Ancient Times,& from that skill,which the Grecians gained among them. But it is as evident that all their Theological Learning was lamentably frivolous, obſcure, fabulous, uncouth, magical and ſuperſtitious. The Scythian Taraboſteſci, the Perſian Magi, the Indian Brachmans and Gymnoſophiſts, the Egyptian Prieſts, the Bards and Druids of Gaul and Brittain,and other Ancient Sects have (I confeſs) made a great noiſe in the world , yet they that endeavour to celebrate them moſt, tell us ſo many Superſtitious and Pedantick ſtories, as ſufficiently evince them to have been no very extraordinary Perſons. Any one that conſiders thoſe few Opinions and Ratiocinations of theirs that are ſtill extant, will eaſily conclude them to have been men of no great Reaſon or Judgment. Some have endeavour'd to maintain the Credit of this Ancient Learning by retreiving and collecting its ſcattered Fragments, and others by counterfeiting ſuppoſititious Authors , ſuch as *Zoroaſter* and *Hermes Triſmegiſtus*, but whoever will be at the paines to peruſe *Zoroaſter*'s Oracles, the Books of *Triſmegiſt*, the Writings of *Pſellus* , and the *Earl* of *Mirandula*'s Riddles, with which he challenged all the Learned world, will need no other proof of the Vanity of

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all pretences to the more abſtruſe and myſtical Learning of the Antients. I do not queſtion but that great and honourable Perſonage I laſt mentioned, was a Perſon of ſtupendious Parts and Learning, yet I am ſure that thoſe Notions, wherewith he made the greateſt Noiſe in the world, were but grand and pompous Futilities.

The Old *Egyptian* Learning was ſo Famous, that the Spirit of God, ſets forth the Eminency of *Moſes*'s knowledge by his skill in it,& the matchleſneſs of *Solomons* Wiſdom by its exceeding it; And therefore I conclude that it was converſant about more generous and more uſeful Notices then afterwards; ſuch as *Geometry*, *Aſtronomy*, *Policy*, *Phyſick*, and other reſembling Arts, which either were perfective of their Rational Faculties, or did miniſter to the uſes and neceſſities of Nature: as is generally reported by all Ancient Hiſtorians. But had the Priſtine Learning of *Egypt* been the ſame it was in latter Ages, it had been as great a diſparagement to *Moſes*, as 'tis now juſtly reputed a commendation, that he was accompliſhed in all the *Egyptian* learning, and had amounted only to this, that he was a vain, trifling, ſuperſtitious Fellow. And what the *Egyptian* Prieſt objected to the Greeks, that they were always Children, might be more truly applied to themſelves, if it be the property of children

Act. 7. 22. 1 *King.* 4. 29, 30.

dren to value trifles. What childiſh fooleries their Hieroglyphicks were, Learned Men now prove from the loſt labour and fruitleſs induſtry of *Kirchers Oedipus Ægyptiacus*. Certainly, if they had deſign'd to abuſe and debauch this humour, they could ſcarce have contrived more fond and extravagant Emblems; and indeed their courſeneſs and unlikeneſs to the things they ſhould reſemble, ſufficiently diſcover them to have been but the rude Eſſays of a barbarous and undiſciplined Fancy. The truth of it is, the *Egyptians* ſeem to have had onely knowledge enough, to know that their neighbours had none at all, and cunning enough to vaunt an Inſpection into ſtrange and abſtruſe Myſteries, knowing that others by reaſon of their Ignorance could not controule them, and by reaſon of their credulity would be very apt to credit them, and thence they continually abuſed the credulous Grecians with Tales and Fables. And ſurely the *Egyptian* Prieſt took not a little ſecret pleaſure, when he perceived Old *Solon* to entertain his Romantick and Legendary account of Ancient Times with ſo much greedineſs and ſatisfaction; unleſs perhaps himſelf had been impoſed upon by earlier Romancers, for I fancy the *Egyptian* Prieſts to have been ſuch another generation of men, as our Monks were in the darkeſt times of Popery, who believed as well as recorded thoſe Legends, which earlier Im-

In Platonis Timæo.

poſtors had Coined. So that if the ancient Sages of *Greece* had purchaſed no more knowledge by their Travels into *Egypt*, then thoſe few remainders of *Egyptian* learning ſtill upon Record (excepting a few Mathematical Theories) they had ſpent their time and pains to as little purpoſe, as the famous Traveller of *Odcomb*, who footed moſt parts of the known world to no other purpoſe, then to deſcribe his Hoſts Beard or Sign-Poſt. I might here alſo give an account of the mean abilities of *Orpheus* and *Pythagoras*, but I delight not to ſpeak too hardly of any *Vertuoſo*'s Aſhes, and therefore I forbear: For it is not my deſign, by repreſenting theſe Primitive ſages as fools and dunces to rob them of that eſteem and veneration, with which they have been deſervedly honoured in all ſucceeding Ages, for though it be granted that their knowledge was much inferiour to that of latter Ages, (for Learning being then in its Infancy, muſt needs be Childiſh, but is ſince grown more ſolid and manly) yet it is but reaſonable they ſhould be allowed bigger Proportions of Honour and Renown, not only becauſe they were very wiſe Men, conſidering the rudeneſs and ignorance of the times, in which they lived, but becauſe they were the firſt founders and diſcoverers of that knowledge, which after Ages have but improved, and the world ſurely is much more beholding to thoſe that firſt invent uſeful Arts and Sciences, than to thoſe that onely improve

improve them; it is therefore juſt, they ſhould be allowed greater Glory, though they had much leſs knowledge then their followers. Beſides, *Theological* ſpeculations met with the lateſt and ſloweſt improvements, and therefore thoſe that might have conſiderable skill in other Theories, might be (as indeed they were) barbarouſly ignorant in theſe.

2. I perceive not any ſuch clear Agreement between the *Platonick Philoſophie* and the Sacred Scriptures, as may give us any tolerable ground of ſuſpecting the one to have been derived from the other: For moſt of the Notions, in which *Plato* ſpeaks moſt conſonantly to the Scriptures, are ſo obvious and ſo univerſally acknowledged, that it is eaſie to diſcern how he came by them, without any acquaintance with the holy Writings: ſuch as are the Being of God, the Immortality of the Soul, the Eſſential differences of Good and Evil, ſome general Rules of Natural and Eſſential Goodneſs. Thus his Exceptions againſt the Grecian Idolatry and Superſtition muſt by all means be tranſcribed from the *Moſaick* Writings, and when in the *Eighth Book* of his Laws, he enjoyns Solemn Feſtivals in honour of the Gods, he muſt needs have it from the fourth Commandment of the Decalogue, and when in the *Tenth Book*, he declaims againſt Irreverence in Divine Worſhip, he muſt by all means borrow it from the

V. Collium de animab. Pagan. l. 5. c. 17, 25. Clem. Alex. Strom. 1. Euſeb. prepar. Evang. l. 11, 12.

ſecond Precept, and when in his *Eleventh Book* he treats of honour due from Children to their Parents, he muſt doubtleſly have read the fifth Commandment, and the like in other Inſtances. Whereas the natural reaſonableneſs of theſe Principles is in it ſelf ſo apparently clear & evident, that they could ſcarce eſcape the obſervation of any rational and inquiſitive man; and therefore *Plato*'s lighting upon them is no more an Argument, that he was converſant in the *Moſaick* Writings, then is his ſaying that the Sun is the brighteſt Star in the Firmament. And then as for their more hidden and abſtruſe myſteries, where they ſeem to agree moſt, their difference is greater then their agreement; and it would not be difficult to ſhew how theſe Notions, which have the faireſt Conſonancy to Scripture, are derived from *Hypotheſes* that have none at all, as I ſhall anon evince in the Article of the Trinity. And ſhall in the Interim ſhew the infirmity and vanity of this conceit, by ſhewing the weakneſs of that Authority, upon which it is grounded.

The firſt time then, that I met with it, was in Modern Authors, who vouch'd the Authority of the Primitive Fathers for it, betaking my ſelf therefore to them, I found ſome of them to aver it indeed with no ſmall earneſtneſs, eſpecially *Clemens Alexandrinus*, *Euſebius*, *Theodoret*, but upon no better grounds, then the naked aſſertions of two or three

Jews

Jews (eſpecially *Cleobulus* and *Joſephus*) and that, when contending about the Glories and Prerogatives of their own Nation, in which Controverſie men of all Nations are apparently partial for their own, but none ſo groſsly as the Jews; who would have their Nation the only Fountain of all knowledge and wiſdom (as if all other men had been meer Muſhromes, and had not reaſon enough to reflect upon and obſerve the natures and properties of Things) and therefore *Ariſtobulus* (the first Founder and Foundation of this Conceit) does with the ſame Confidence maintain that the Peripatetick Philoſophie was ſtoln out of *Moſes* and the Prophets, as that the Fancies of *Plato* and *Pythagoras* were taken thence. There are perhaps one or two obſolete *Grecian* Teſtimonies produced on the behalf of this Opinion, but I ſhall not be at the pains critically to examine their weight and authority, becauſe I have as great a ſuſpition of all thoſe obſolete records concerning the *Jewiſh Nation* cited by ſome Ancient Authors, as I have of their *Sibillan Prophecies* and other confeſſed Impoſtures, in that moſt of them diſcover their own Forgery: As thoſe ſo famous and ſtill credited Teſtimonies of *Apollo*'s *Oracle* on behalf of the Jewes, of which there is a great multitude in *Euſebius* his *Præparatio Evangelica*, among the reſt this is one of the *famouſeſt*

Apud Clem Alexand. Strom. 5.

Μοῦνοι Χαλδαίοι σοφίαν λάχον ἠδ' ἀρ' Ἑβραῖοι
Αὐτογένεθλον ἄνακτα σεβαζόμενοι Θεὸν ἀγνῶς. *lib. 9. c. 10.*

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The Chaldeans and Hebrews alone are Profeſſors of true Wiſdome, who worſhip the Eternal God in a pure and holy manner. 'Tis ſtrange *Euſebius* ſhould think the world ſo credulous (& yet ſo credulous it has been) as to believe that this *Diſtick* ever drop'd from *Apollo*'s *Oracle*, for whether that were inſpired by the *Prieſts*, or by the *Divel*, I am confident they were neither of them ſo honeſt or ſo ſimple, as thus openly to commend the *Jewiſh Religion* and condemn their own.

But now as for thoſe Writers, who were beſt able to give the trueſt account of the *Commerce* between the Jewes and the Grecians (if there had been any) they are univerſally ſilent in it: The *Ancient Records* of *Greece* are ſcarce more ſilent in any thing, then the *Jewiſh Nation*. Though they relate frequent *Voyages* of their wiſe men into *Forreigne Countries*, yet no mention at all of their *Jewiſh Traffick*; they acknowledge their *Geometrie* to have been imported from *Egypt*, their *Aſtronomie* from *Chaldea*, their *Arithmetick* from *Phenicia*, their *Theologie* from *Perſia*, but no account of their *Cargo from Judæa*. And *Lactantius* juſtly and ſeriouſly chides with the Ancient Philoſophers, becauſe they neglected to trade with the Jewes for *wiſdome*, as well as other Nations. *Equidem mirari ſoleo* (ſaies he) *quod cum Pythagoras & poſtea Plato amore indagandæ veritatis ad Ægyptios, & Ma-*

De verâ Sap. cap. 2.

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gos, & Perſas uſque Penetraſſent, ut earum Gentium ritus & ſacra Cognoſcerent (ſuſpicabantur enim ſapientiam in Religione verſari) ad Judæos tamen non acceſſerint, penes quos tum ſolos fuit, & quo facilius ire potuiſſent. There are indeed ſome *conjectures* to make it probable that the *Grecians* might confound *Judea* with *Phœnicia*, which if true, 'tis a good Argument that they had very little knowledge of it; for 'tis not likely that any, who converſed with the *Jewiſh Nation* ſhould confound them with the *Phœnicians*, when there was ſo vaſt not only difference but contrariety between them as to their *Civil State*, *Laws*, *Cuſtomes*, and *Religion*. Nay the Jewiſh Religion, Cuſtomes,& Laws being of ſo peculiar a conſtitution from thoſe of all other Nations, it can ſcarce be ſuppoſed but that thoſe who ſo carefully obſerved the Laws and Cuſtomes of *Forreign Nations*, as the *Grecian Philoſophers* did, ſhould have taken a more ſignal and particular Notice of the *Jewiſh Conſtitutions* if they had been acquainted with them. Beſides all which, let me add that we find as great a conſonancy of the opinions of the *Wiſe men* of other Nations with the *Hebrew Writings*, where there appeare no foot-ſteps of commerce between them, as of the Grecians. For inſtance, though *Numa Pompilius* is generally acknowledged the firſt *Pythagorean* (being more ancient then *Pythagoras*) yet there is not the leaſt appearance of any commerce between him

him and the Jewes. And therefore when Mr *Selden* thinks that if thoſe 7 Books of Wiſdome found in the Field of *Petilius* An. ab U. C. DLXX. and attributed to *Numa* by an Inſcription upon the Cheſt in which they were, were really his, that he was probably not unacquainted with the Diſcipline of the *Hebrews*, only becauſe *Caſſius Hemina* and *C. Piſo* in *Plinie* report that the matter contained in them was very conſonant to the *Pythagorick Philoſophie*; the beſt foundation of the conjecture is the (deſerved) greatneſs of his own *name* and *authority*, for you cannot but perceive that in it ſelf 'tis very fond & frivolous, and if ſuch a licentious latitude may be allowed in hiſtorical *gueſſes*, *Quidlibet ex Quolibet* will ſoon be as warantable a *maxime* in Hiſtory, as 'tis in the *Epicurean Philoſophie*. It were eaſie to have given you a larger account hereof, but I write a *Letter* not a *Treatiſe*.

De Jure Nat. & Gent. Li c. 2.

3. As to the pretence of a *Vocal Cabala*, I can ſcarce without amazement conſider with what confidence and eagerneſs ſome learned men of late have cryed up an invention ſo novel and fanciful; for I know nothing more precarious and deſtitute of tolerable pretences then theſe *Cabaliſtical Traditions*, being only a late & ſilly Invention of the *Jewiſh Rabbins*: for they are altogether unknown to and unmentioned by the ancient both Jewes and Chriſtians. And yet *Kircher* (who never gives out at credulity)

Oedip. tom. 2. claſſ. 4. prefat.

dulity) would have every one that does not believe the Divine Original of the *Cabala* to be convicted of Hereſie as an Enemy to the Divine Providence. But for my part, I cannot underſtand how any Rational man can be at all concerned for ſo vain and frivolous an Invention of the Modern (*i. e.* trifling) *Rabbins*. But he that could find all the Learning of the world in an *Egyptian Hieroglyphick* may find all the Articles of his Faith in a *Rabbinical Fable*. 'Tis certain that the *Cabala* was invented ſince the diſperſion of the *Jewiſh Nation*, (there being not the leaſt footſteps of it before) but in what Century or Period is uncertain and muſt remain ſo, for from the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* there commenced as to the *Jewiſh Hiſtory* a Tempus ἄδηλον (a Period alwayes fit for Fables;) there being no *Records* or *Monuments* of their Condition and Affairs, (unleſs ſome few fabulous Relations in the *Talmud*.) But whatever became of them, 'tis certain that being given up to a vain and trifling ſpirit, they imployed themſelves, in fooliſh & abſurd Inventions, of which making Myſtical and Allegorical Interpretations of Scripture is none of the leaſt: eſpecially when they prefer them ſo much before the true and literal meaning: for they compare the Scripture it ſelf to a *Candle*, but the Myſtical ſenſe to a *Jewel*, for the diſcovery where-

of the Candle is lighted; and the *Miſnical Doctors* (that is, they that ſtudy onely the litteral ſenſe) are compared to *Apothecaries*, who only prepare thoſe Medicaments, which the *Phyſitian* preſcribes, but the *Cabbaliſtical Doctors* to *Phyſitians*, who underſtand their Natures, Uſes, and ſecret Properties. And therefore they leave the litteral and ſuperficial ſenſe of Scripture, to the rude and ignorant People, whilſt they that are Learned dive into the myſteries and depths of the Law, and by the help of Fancy fetch ſtrange and wonderful ſecrets from Words, Letters, Points, from their ſeveral Shapes, Combinations, Tranſpoſitions, Abbreviatures, Arithmetical Indications, and the like. And then with a frontleſs Impudence, aſſert that they came Originally from *Adam*, *Abraham*, and *Moſes*. You may ſee enough of this *Cabbaliſtical* Traſh in a thouſand Authours, but moſt Copiouſly in *Reuchlin de Arte Cabbaliſtica*, and in that grand Theſaurus of Learned Trifles, *Kirchers Oedip. tom.* 2. *Claſſ.* 4. The firſt that produced them into the Chriſtian World was the *Earl of Mirandula*, in whoſe time the very word *Cabbala* was ſo unknown, that (as *Hottinger* relates out of *Garzon*) it was taken for a Witch, *Vetula veneficiis dedita*. And the *Earl* himſelf relates in his *Apology*, that one of his greateſt Antagoniſts being

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ing asked what this *Cabbala* was, replyed that he was a certain notorious Heretick, that had oppoſed himſelf againſt *Jeſus Chriſt*, and that from him his Accomplices and Followers were named *Cabbaliſtæ*. The *Earl*, when he had at a high price purchaſed ſome ſmall fragments of it from the *Jews*, thought himſelf Maſter of the moſt ancient and valuable Monument in the World: The miſtake was pardonable in him, but unpardonable in thoſe who ſince have had opportunity to examine its firſt riſe and antiquity, and cannot diſcern the leaſt *Traces* of it beyond the *Talmudical Rabbins*: Beſides this, I might overthrow the *Cabbala* from rational Arguments taken from the thing it ſelfe, as that it would reflect upon the Wiſdom of God, that he ſhould conveigh down ſuch material and important Truths (as are ſuppoſed to be contained in the *Cabbala*) by ſo uncertain and queſtionable a way, as *Oral Tradition*. That it renders the Word of God ridiculous and uſeleſs, and makes its meaning altogether doubtful and ambiguous, and expoſes it to the giddy and fanciful Conjectures of every *warm Brain*: but the groundleſneſs of the thing it ſelf, makes all other confutation needleſs. Some (not unlearned men) have urged the *Conſiſtency* of the *Cabbala* with it ſelf, and the *ſuitableneſs* of the *Allegory* to the *Text* as no contemptible Argument

of its Truth and Solidity. But alas, (beſide that moſt of their *Analogies* between the Myſtery and the Text are ſufficiently forced and uncouth) there's nothing more eaſie then for Fancy to find ſome *Conſonancy* between the moſt diſtant things, eſpecially in ſuch various and unlimited things as *Allegories* are. If you ſhould require it, I think I could with an ordinary plauſibility draw up a body of the *Epicurean Philoſophie* out of the Writings of *Jacob Behem*, and yet perhaps it would puzle you to think of any *Hypotheſes* of a more diſtant *Genius* then they. Such an *Africa* is Fancy, that it can couple things of the moſt diſtant and contrary Natures. And therefore I ſhall never think the prettieſt *Parallels*, *Analogies*, and *Similitudes*, to be any tollerable Arguments.

4. Having thus evidenced the unwarrantable Raſhneſs of deriving *Platonick Notions* from *Jewiſh Traditions*, I come in the next place to give (1.) A brief Account of the Riſe of that ſeeming agreeableneſs between the *Platonick* and the *Chriſtian Trinity*. (2.) To ſhew by what Principles and ſteps the *Platoniſts* happened upon their *Triad*.

For the firſt it ſeems to have its *Original* from thoſe counterfeit and ſuppoſititious Authors, which pretended to the greateſt Antiquity, but yet were really

really compoſed by the *Gnoſticks* out of the *Ethnick* and *Chriſtian Theologie*, and aſcribed to names of the greateſt Antiquity and Veneration, ſuch as *Hermes Triſmegiſtus*, *Zoroaſters Oracles*, the *Sybillan Prophecies*, now it were ſtrange if in theſe Authors there did not appear ſome kind of Reſemblance and Vicinity between the *Platonick Philoſophie* and the *Holy Scriptures*, ſeeing they had by all Artificial ways blended them together; as by coupling their different terms to expreſs the ſame thing, for whereas the *Scripture* ſtiles the *firſt Perſon* of the *Trinity* πατὴρ, and *Plato* the firſt of his Trinity μονὰς, they joyn'd them together, and call him πατρικὴ μονὰς, and as the *Second Perſon* is in Scripture termed υἱὸς, and in *Plato* νῦς, in theſe he is generally ſtiled νῦς υἱὸς: Now they that knew nothing of the *Impoſture*, meeting with ſuch an *Artificial* agreement between *Platonick Notions* and *Chriſtian Doctrines*, might eaſily imagine that it was *natural*. The firſt Author of this miſtake ſeems to have been *Ammonius of Alexandria* (Father to that *Golden Chain* of Philoſophers of the *Sacred ſucceſſion*) who being both a *Chriſtian* and a *Platoniſt*, & lighting upon theſe *Spurious Books*, in which the *Platonick Notions* and *Chriſtian Articles* were blended and reconciled together, might thence be eaſily induced to fancy a true and real Conſonancy between them, And therefore *Patricius* avers *Panarch. lib. 9.*

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that he was the first that understood aright the notion of *Plato*'s *Threefold Principle*, and that he came by this knowledge by perusing the *Books of Trismegistus*. And hence those Platonists that followed him might speak of the *Trinity* more consonantly to the Scriptures, then perhaps they intended, though not long after these Impostures were discovered by *Porphyrie*, as himself relates in the *Life of Plotinus*.

For the second, the *Platonick Triad* is widely different from the *Christian*, for they intend by it so many *Orders* and *Ranks* of *Intellectual Beings*, and frequently added a fourth, which was the *Humane Soul*, and set it at no greater distance from the Third, by which they meant the *Soul* of this *Universe*, then that was removed from the Second, by which they meant the *First mind* or soul of the *Immaterial world*. And their *Progress* to the knowledge of these Beings proceeded in this Method.

1. They suppose all things to ascend by *Scales* to Unity, as *Plato* endeavours to prove in his *Parmenides*, πᾶν πλῆθος μετέχει τοῦ ἑνός Unity is the Origine of all Number, or all mix'd and compounded Beings must be at last resolved into some one simple and *unmix'd Principle*, otherwise the resolution would be endless, so that all blended and *Heterogeneous Perfections* both material and immaterial must of necessity

ceſſity exiſt ſomewhere ſimple and unmix'd. And then all *Immaterial Perfections* being found blended together in the *Humane Soul*, they concluded that as many degrees of Perfection as they could diſcover there, that there were ſo many *Ranks* of ſuperior and more *homogeneal Beings* in the *Intellectual world*. The Soul therefore (as they apprehended) conſiſting of four parts, muſt have the fourth Rank in the order of *Intellectual Beings*, and by conſequence there muſt be *three ſuperior Orders* more ſimple and uncompounded, which muſt by ſeveral ſteps as far exceed each other, as the loweſt order ſurmounts the Soul, to the higheſt whereof muſt of neceſſity agree pure and meer *ſimplicity*.

2. That which is the *ſupream Being*, and conſequently the *firſt Author* of all other *Beings*, muſt of neceſſity be the higheſt perfection, and contain in it ſelf all the *Excellency* and *Accompliſhments* of all its *Productions*, & yet by vertue of the former maxime it can be but one ſimple and uncompounded perfection, and therefore to find out its *Nature*, they conſider with themſelves what one *Simple Perfection* is ſo abſolute and tranſcendent as to comprehend all others; and at length conclude that Goodneſs is the moſt conſummate and moſt entirely compleat Perfection conceivable, and therefore that the moſt ſimple and unmixt Goodneſs muſt be the *Firſt Being*.

Being. Which as 'tis τἀγαθὸν *i. e. pure goodneſs*, ſo it is τὸ ἓν *i. e. meer Unity* or rather *ſimplicity*, and has the ſame Relation to the other Beings, as Unity has to Number. Now they do not attribute the *Creation* and *Government* of the *world* to this *Being* we have already diſcovered, but to the *ſecond Being*, for, ſay they, it could not flow from the *Firſt*, unleſs the *Ideas* of all Things had reſided in him, but then he could not have been *abſolutely ſimple*, having ſuch a *multiplicity of Ideas* within him. But *Ideas* lodging in the *Intellect*, the Second Being which was nothing but *Intellect* was not only capable of receiving them, but had in him as it were an *Ocean* of them, which *flowing* from him filled all *Poſſibilities of Being* with *actual Exiſtencies*. Upon this account they ſtiled there τἀγαθὸν πηγὴ πηγῶν becauſe it was not the immediate *Fountain* of Things, but only the *Cauſe* of that which was. And therefore I am apt to think that upon what *Rationalities* ſoever they pretend to introduce their τὸ ἀγαθὸν, that their firſt inducement to it was, that they might riſe higher then *Anaxagoras* and thoſe other *Philoſophers*, that aſſerted an *Eternal* νοῦς to be the *Firſt Being* and *Firſt Cauſe* of all things.

3. *Intellect* or *Underſtanding* being the *Nobleſt Perfection* next to *Goodneſs*, the ſecond thing muſt be ſimply and abſolutely νοῦς, and being the *Supream Entity*,

Entity, it must also be τὸ ὄν, but because 'tis compounded of *Intellect* and *Entity* 'tis ὄν only by *Participation*. And hence was started that nice Controversy, whether is superior *Ens* or *Unum*? The Earl of *Mirandula*'s Book *de Uno & Ente* is only a Dispute against the *Platonists*, to prove *Unity* not superior to *Entity*, because they assert their Original and Uncreated μόνας to be the *Principle* of all *Beings*, whilst it self is ὑπερέχουσα τ' οὐσίας, and therefore they will not permit you to terme it οὐσία, but have invented that higher one of ὑπερουσία a *Nature* that is placed above *Essentiality*. But seeing (by the way) οὐσία signifies nothing but the *Essence* or *Existence* of the Thing, to which it is applyed, 'tis a gross Contradiction to deny it of any thing, that really exists, because if it exists, it must surely be it self, and if so, it may by consequence with as great Propriety of speech be denominated οὐσία, as any thing else. But whatever that Term imports, the signification of ὑπερουσία is of necessity most uncertain and ambiguous, for no body understands how much ὑπερ advanceth the signification of οὐσία, and because it may signifie any thing it does in effect signifie nothing, for an *indeterminate signification* is all one with an insignificant one. And yet in this *Particle* consists a great part of the *mysterious sublimity* of the supposititious and counterfeit *Areopagite*. But 'tis not my business to

confute but to represent their *Notions*, seeing therefore they will Place the *Supream Cause* of all ὑπερέχων τ ὑσία ; the *Second Being* in order which is νῦς, must be τι ὄν καθ' ἑξοχὴν because it is πρῶτον καὶ ὄντων.

4. Their third Principle, which proceeds from the second as that from the first, is ψυχὴ, by which they understand nothing but the Soul of the Universe, and therefore usually stile it δημιουργία, as being the Architect of the World ; and hence as they assert the ἀγαθὸν or self originated Goodness to be καθ' αἰτίαν νῦς *Causally Intellect* ; and the νῦς or First mind to be καθ αἰτίαν ψυχὴ *Causally Soul*, so they make ψυχὴ to be καθ' αἰτίαν ὕλη καὶ κόσμος because 'tis the Cause of Matter and the Universe. I have already given you *Plato*'s wild description of this Hypostasis; and therefore (especially because I begin to tire and faulter) I shall not trouble you with any farther account thereof, having sufficiently shewed the difference of the vulgar Doctrine of the Trinity from the Platonick Triad, and withal from what Principles and by what Reasonings the Platonists hap'ned to own and assert their Threefold Principle.

It were easie (*Sir*) to add Infinite Considerations more, but if these wherewith I have already presented you be material, I have said enough ; if not, too much. Being therefore already tyred, I will not

not put my ſelf to the trouble of careſſing you with a fine and courtly Concluſion, but ſhall Bluntly and without any Ceremony ſumm up the main ſcope and ſignification of this tedious Letter into this one Serious and Eternal Truth, that I am,

Sir

Your moſt Faithful

moſt Humble, and moſt

Affectionate Servant,

S. PARKER.

PAg. 16. *l.* 15. *for* Mortality *read* Morality. *p.* 18. *l.* 7. *for* ſcrambling for aſpiring *read* ſcrambling for And aſpiring. *p.* 33. *l.* 3. for *Politanus* read *Politianus. p.* 93. *l. ult.* for יהוה *read* יהוה

FINIS.

Thomas Sargeaunt